APRIL 1990
£1.25p I.R. £1.86p

WORLD SOCCER

The INTERNATIONAL Magazine

ITALIA'90

WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

Belgium
South Korea
Uruguay
Spain
England
Holland
Republic of Ireland
Egypt

Zagalo: Why I was sacked

European League results and scorers

PSV striker Romario hopes to be fit for the World Cup after breaking a leg against Den Haag.

Koeman joins Gullit on injury list

MORE FAMOUS names have joined Ruud Gullit on the list of injury doubts ahead of the World Cup finals.

One is fellow Dutchman Erwin Koeman. The Mechelen midfielder damaged ligaments in a Belgian league match. The initial prognosis was poor. However, Marc Martens, the Belgian specialist who has been treating Gullit believes Koeman's injury is not as serious as had been thought and that rest, rather than surgery, can return him to fitness in time for the finals in Italy.

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That would be wonderful news for a Milan side beginning to stagger under the weight of fixture pressure. Milan have been playing two matches a week since the start of the year – counting league, Italian cup and most recently Champions' Cup commitments. That went a long way to explain their disappointing displays in the Champions' Cup quarter-final first leg against Mechelen in Brussels, and then in a 3-1 league derby defeat by Internazionale.

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But both tournaments were scarred by political controversies which did nothing to improve the unreliable administrative image of the game in both Africa and the Middle East.

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Eliminated

Algeria protested, whereupon Egypt threatened to pull out altogether. In the end the Egyptians' B squad was accepted and were duly eliminated in the first round, amid scenes of predictable crowd unrest.

In the Gulf Cup, Saudi Arabia pulled out before the start in political pique over the Kuwaitis' symbol for the tournament – which depicted two horses which, to Saudi eyes, symbolised a historic battle in which Kuwait had defeated their Arab neighbours.

That was not the end of the political wrangling. Iraq later walked out in the middle of the tournament in protest at the expulsion of star player Adnan Darjal in a 2-2 draw against the UAE.

* Algeria's triumph – See Centre Pages

"COWARDICE" and "Vengeance". Those were the words used by Mario Zagalo to describe the United Arab Emirates' inexplicable decision to sack him.

It was Zagalo who was responsible for the feat of getting the UAE, a country of 1.5 million people where the football federation was formed only in 1972, to the World Cup.

The team was regarded as the weakest of the six teams who took part in the Asian qualifying final tournament in Singapore. Yet, thanks to the Brazilian's leadership they managed to finish second – ahead of Saudi Arabia, China, North Korea and Qatar – with an unbeaten record.

Zagalo's "reward" for this was to be shabbily dismissed shortly afterwards and be denied the chance of taking part in the World Cup for the fifth time – he was a player in the 1958 and 1962 competitions and managed the Brazil teams that won in 1970 and finished fourth in 1974.

In reports at the time of Zagalo's dismissal, the UAE federation claimed that he had taken too long over a holiday in Brazil and had failed to plan the team's preparation for the World Cup.

But Zagalo, who only spoke about the incident after returning to Brazil in mid-February, vehemently denied both claims. He said that the UAE federation had bought the tickets and made the reservations for the journeys to and from Brazil and that he had even interrupted his holiday to attend the World Cup draw in Rome.

"We (Zagalo and his assistant Admildo Chirol who was also dismissed) came here with the dates fixed by the federation and we kept religously to what had been planned," Zagalo told WORLD SOCCER.

Zagalo believes that his dismissal was the result of a problem which arose over the payment of a bonus he

Holland fire

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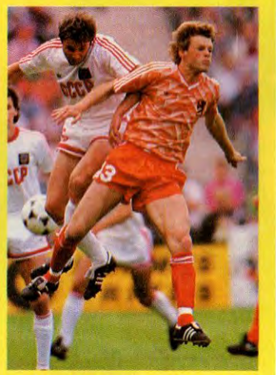

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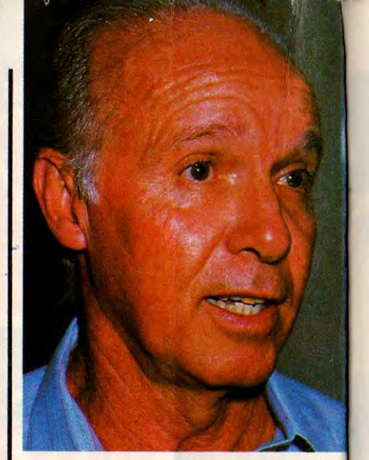
ZAGALO: WHY I WAS SACKED



BY PAUL MOON

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"We (Zagalo and his assistant Admildo Chirol who was also dismissed) came here with the dates fixed by the federation and we kept religously to what had been planned," Zagalo told WORLD SOCCER.

Zagalo believes that his dismissal was the result of a problem which arose over the payment of a bonus he was entitled to receive for the team's qualification and that it was caused by a businessman who holds a powerful influence in the UAE federation.

Zagalo said that the story began in November a week after he had returned to Brazil on holiday, when Hamad Brook, a member of the UAE federation called Chirol asking him and Zagalo to attend the World Cup draw in Italy. Zagalo said they agreed and Chirol was then told that Brook would bring the cheque to pay the bonus.

"After the draw we went to Bologna to choose the concentration and training venue. The next day we took a car to Milan where the game against West Germany will be played. We made arrangements to travel to Milan on the morning before the game and train at the stadium in the afternoon.

"About three hours before Brook was due to leave, he called us to talk about the programme, which we had already handed him."

Zagalo said that after the conversation, Brook handed him a cheque which had been presented by the UAE government as a "gift" for the team's qualification. Zagalo signed a receipt for the cheque but was then asked to sign a receipt saying that he had received the bonus owed him by the federation as well.

"I said No," Zagalo continued. "I said I'm not going to sign this because I'm receiving a cheque from the government which is a present. My contract is paid by the federation and so you can't pay my bonus with a cheque from the government – they are separate things. I can't sign two receipts and receive one cheque.

Tense

"After this, the climate turned a bit tense and we went back to talking about the preparation, about how many games I wanted for the training and about the Gulf Cup. But when we finished, I said to him: 'When we arrive in Dubai, I want to speak to Shaikh Hamdan (the president of the UAE football federation) because you are trying to pay my contract with a cheque from the government. I don't believe this cheque was for the contract!"

However, Zagalo said that after returning to Dubai on January 8, he learned from a journalist that he had been sacked. He was officially informed on January 13 by a member of the federation he had never met before. He never had the opportunity to speak to Shaikh Hamdan.

Zagalo believes that he was fired on the basis of a personality clash with Brook.

Brook and Shaikh Hamdan are close friends and, although Brook does not hold a post with the federation and is theoretically and ordinary member of the committee, it is he who more or less controls everything through his friendship with the president.

Zagalo said that he had never had problems with anyone else in the country – "I can only offer praise to the press, who treated me very well all the time, and the public."

But despite this, the press had only taken the federation's side of this matter into account. Zagalo says that this is because the press is tightly controlled and "cannot print what it wants."

"What happened to us was vengeance. I feel very happy, obviously, at getting into the World Cup. But what they did to us was cowardice. Not being able to work at my fifth World Cup is the biggest frustration of my sporting life."

Zagalo was extremely critical of Brook's role in the UAE federation, saying: "He's a businessman, a billionaire but he does not have the knowledge to be a football director. Yet he has absolute power."

In spite of everything, Zagalo says that he hopes the UAE do well in Italy – "I wish the UAE all the best. The public gave us a lot of support. I'm not going to turn against the UAE because of one person."

Zagalo believes that taking part in the World Cup will be "a lesson" for the team.

"There has been a very big evolution in the UAE. But this qualification is a very big step. For this country, just to qualify was like winning a world title."

Holland fire Thys Libregts!

THE World Cup managerial carousel keeps on turning with the United Arab Emirates naming a third manager in six weeks, Costa Rica sacking Marvin Rodriguez, Cameroon preparing to dispense with Valeri Nepomniachi and Holland dismissing Thys Libregts.

The UAE are the World Cup finalists in most serious trouble. Mario Zagalo, who guided them cleverly through the qualifiers, was dismissed for diplomatic rather than technical reasons. His successor, Bernard Blaut, former Poland international fullback, was dismissed after the UAE's disastrous showing in the Gulf Cup last month.

The UAE ended a poor tournament by crashing 6-1 to their Kuwaiti hosts and Blaut was immediately sacked.

In his place the UAE have appointed Carlos Alberto Parreira, the Brazilian who took Kuwait to the 1982 World Cup finals and who was later, briefly, national manager of Brazil.

Carlos Alberto – not to be confused with the World Cup-winning skipper of similar name from 1970 – is now in his second stint with the UAE. He was previously employed in 1987-88 before being lured away by a huge offer from Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis' failure in the World Cup qualifiers and the political problems which kept them out of the Gulf Cup were no doubt important factors in his decision to return to the UAE.

Also back on the World Cup scene is Velibor 'Bora' Milutinovic, the Yugoslav-born coach who masterminded Mexico's best-ever World Cup campaign on home ground four years ago. Milutinovic was top of the Costa Rica shortlist once the federation had decided, in the wake of a disappointing appearance at the Marlboro Cup in Los Angeles, to replace Marvin Rodriguez.

One name linked with the Costa Rica job was Cesar Menotti. But his appointment was never a realistic possibility. Menotti is financially out of Costa Rica's reach.

Not so Milutinovic, who has been out of the limelight since a brief, unhappy spell with Udinese in the Italian second division three years ago.

In danger of the sack is Cameroon's Soviet coach, Nepomniachi following the 1988 African champions' toppling in the 1990 finals in Algeria. Favourite to return in charge of Cameroon is Claude Le Roy, the Frenchman who led them to the 1988 title and who managed Senegal in the latest finals.

As for Libregts, he was informed by the Federation that he would be put on half pay to the end of his contract in July and excluded from the World Cup.

One European nation who have secured a new manager are Denmark. The replacement for Turkey-bound Sepp Piontek is his former assistant, Richard Moller-Nielsen. Bayer Uerdingen's Horst Wohlers turned the job down.

WORLD SOCCER
The INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Editor
KEIR RADNEDGE

Managing Editor
PETER STEWART

Group Art Editor
STAN McDONALD

Editorial
01-261 5737

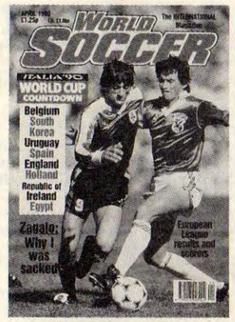
Advertisement Manager
DAVID J. SMITH

Advertising
01-261 5702

Fax
01-261 6019

APRIL 1990
Vol. 30 No. 7

WORLD SOCCER UPDATE
0898-500-208



Enzo Francescoli of Uruguay

25th Floor
King's Reach Tower
Stamford Street
London SE1 9LS

WORLD SOCCER is published by the IPC Magazines Ltd. Origination and typesetting by Meridian Media Services Ltd, Peterborough. Printed by Thamesmouth, Basildon, Essex. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. Copyright IPC Magazines Ltd.

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ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

URUGUAY

FIRST HOLDERS PLAN TO CHANGE THEIR IMAGE

BY ERIC WEIL

URUGUAY'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	161	50	41	70	190	248
Austria	2	1	0	1	3	3
Belgium	1	0	0	1	0	2
Brazil	57	17	11	29	75	101
Colombia	20	9	6	5	28	17
Czechoslovakia	4	2	1	1	7	6
England	7	3	2	2	10	7
Holland	4	3	0	1	6	3
Italy	5	2	2	1	6	4
Rep. Ireland	2	1	1	0	3	1
Rumania	3	1	1	1	5	2
Scotland	4	2	1	1	10	4
South Korea	1	0	1	0	2	2
Soviet Union	7	1	0	6	4	14
Spain	4	0	3	1	3	5
Sweden	3	1	0	2	3	6
USA	2	1	1	0	4	1
W. Germany	6	1	1	4	5	12
Yugoslavia	5	3	0	2	16	6

Enzo Francescoli carries Uruguay's attacking hopes.

URUGUAY are the wonder of the soccer world. With a population of barely three million they have frequently been among the leading teams in the world, winning the World Cup twice (in 1930 and 1950) apart from a third and a fourth place. In fact many people credit this small country with being the instigator of the World Cup in the first place.

When the South Americans won the Olympic Games soccer tournaments in 1914 and 1928 in Paris and Amsterdam respectively – which then counted as the only world championship – their marvellous play drew more crowds than other sports. This made soccer officials think that instead of financing the Olympic Games with their drawing power they could hold their own championship and the idea of the World Cup was born.

Uruguay won the first World Cup, fittingly played in their own country in 1930 and also the second in which they participated in Brazil in 1950. They were third in the next one in 1954 and took fourth place in 1970. That was the golden era of Uruguayan soccer. The country had two big clubs – Penarol and Nacional – who took turns at winning the championship and most of the Nacional team players came from these clubs which made selection and teamwork somewhat easier.

Uruguay's golden soccer era continues – but not at home. The country has become perhaps the biggest exporter of players, certainly if one takes into account their small population. This made it difficult for Uruguay to put out a strong national team regulary and they even found it difficult to bring home all their best players in good time for important tournaments because of the expense involved.

A feature of their play was still their tremendous fighting spirit which resulted in frequent fighting, but often the skill and the right blend and technique was missing.

Uruguay failed to reach the finals in 1978 and 1982 and last time, in Mexico (1986) they made few friends with their negative and rough play, failing to get past the second round.

But when Oscar Washington Tabarez took over as coach in 1988, he was intent on changing the image of Uruguayan soccer because he knew he had the players available who could play a cleaner and more technical soccer that would earn them not only more friends, but also better results. And taking second place to Brazil on their own ground in last year's South American Championship can be considered a good result.

But it has not been smooth running for Tabarez who retired as a player in 1978 after playing for several small Uruguayan clubs and Puebla in Mexico and then coached three small clubs in Uruguay before taking on Penarol with whom he won the 1987 Libertadores Cup to follow this with a short spell in Colombia with Deportiveo Cali. Internal political bickering in Uruguayan soccer last year often made it hard for him to concentrate on his job....or even know whether he would be staying in the position.

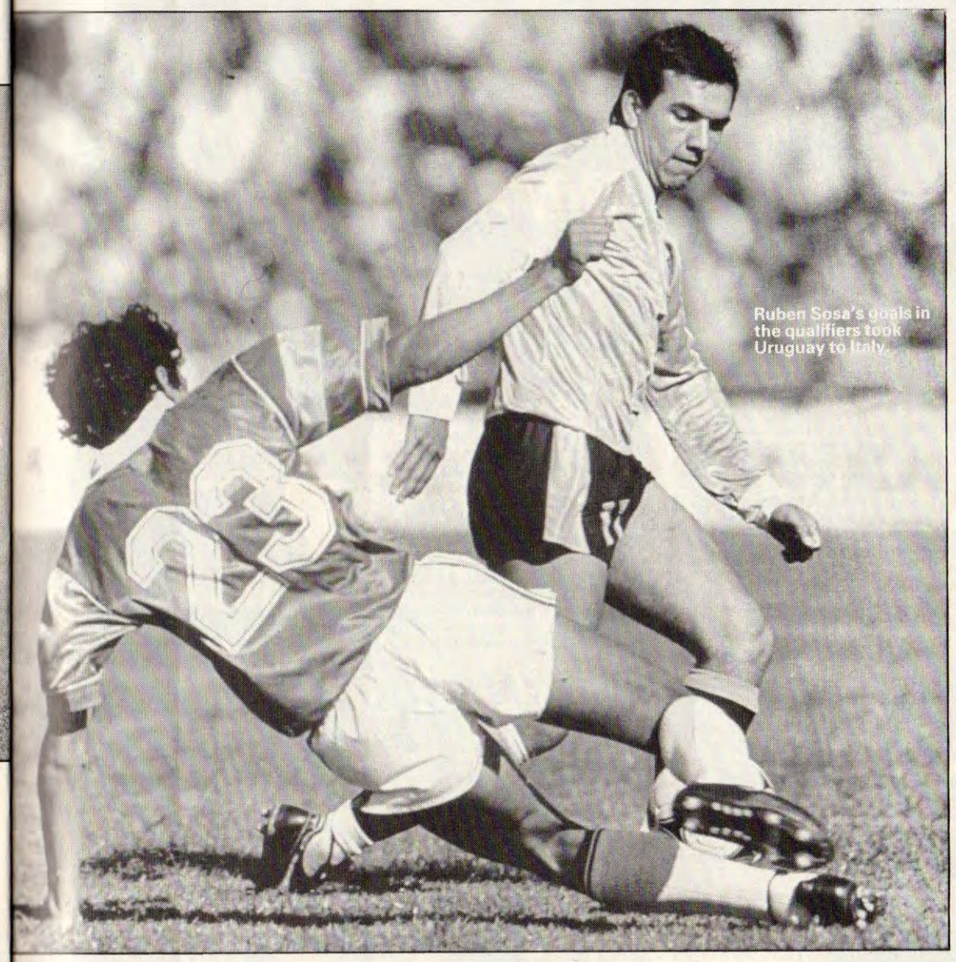
Now he is faced with the same problem as his recent predecessors – 1 of 24 possible players for his final World Cup squad (which made up virtually his entire first choice) are with clubs abroad and not likely to be available until the end of the European season, not long before the start of the World Cup finals. Although earlier this year Uruguay showed that they had good strength in depth when they won an international tournament against Colombia, the US and Costa Rica (all finalists) without them.

Pablo Bengoechea.

But taking an overall look at the possible squad – one notes a possible goalkeeper weakness. The defence is also on the slow side – a Uruguayan characteristic – and some of the players are not too big and also lack a few other technical aspects, some being poor at marking and others at ball control.

Some of the halves are also on the slow side and do not give the attack quick enough service, but this could be solved by lining up such players as Enzo Francescoli, Ruben Da Silva or promising Sergio Martinez – who are all good attackers – in the middle.

Looking at the players individually, attack is now Uruguay's strong point with such prolific scorers as the three above mentioned as well as the national team's top scorers, Carlos Aguilera and Ruben Sosa. The latter, named the best player in last year's South American Championship, fast, agile and with a hard left foot shot, could be one of the stars in Italy also, while Francescoli, always springing up to invent moves and score goals, could be another if Uruguay play a more attacking and cleaner game than in 1986.



Ruben Sosa's goals in the qualifiers took Uruguay to Italy.

Uruguay have not been a free-scoring team, perhaps because they lacked support. In fact Uruguay only qualified for the finals on goal difference. Bolivia won their first three group matches, including a 2-1 home win over Uruguay, and then needed only a draw in Uruguay to reach the finals. Bolovia, not unexpectedly, played defensively and two quick home goals after half an hour put them out, Uruguay then needed to win by any margin against weak Peru to clinch the top spot – which was only achieved with two opportunist goals from Sosa.

Only four players of the 1986 World Cup team are likely to be in this time – goalkeeper Alvez, defender Gutierrez, midfielder Francescoli and striker Aguilera. The new Uruguayan style introduced by Tabarez, a former school teacher, combines the discipline and technique of European football with the natural skill and inventivesness of the South Americans.

Tabarez plans a strong packed defence with four backs, a midfield with two ball winners and two creative players (like Francescoli and Ruben Paz and even Antonio Alzamendi, even if he will be 34 when the World Cup finals come around.

Uruguay have been drawn with Belgium, Spain and South Korea in group E in the first round and Tabarez says: "This is a good group for us. It is hard and although we might not be better than Spain and Belgium, they are not better than us either, so we all have the same chance."

That leaves one other doubt about Uruguay however. Tabarez and the Uruguayan team as a whole have had virtually no experience of European football. Tabarez would have liked to have gone to Europe to watch possible rivals, but lack of money on one hand and internal politics on the other have kept him from doing this. With most of their players with clubs abroad, it was also of little use to organize any tours.

The fact is that since the last World Cup in 1986, Uruguay have only played one European team – Italy, with whom they drew 1-1 last year. The European experience is there, of course, in the shape of players regularly with European clubs and it depends how they will hit it off together without hardly having played in the same team.

THE MANAGER

Oscar Washington TABAREZ, aged 43 (born March 3, 1947). A player with several Uruguayan small teams and Puebla (Mexico) in 1978 and started as coach in 1980 with several small (Uruguayan) clubs before taking Panarol to 1987 Libertadores Cup triumph. He became national team manager in 1988 and has been trying to change the image of Uruguayan soccer as he is convinced that he has the players to turn them into an attacking team playing good soccer instead of the rough team which showed little good play and left a poor impression at the last World Cup finals in Mexico.

THE SQUAD

Eduardo PEREIRA. Goalkeeper. Aged 36 (born March 21, 1954) with 8 caps. The oldest player in the squad and an unusual case of a player only making his international debut at the age of 33 on August 1987. He was only third-choice goakeeper for Nacional when the won the Libertadores Cup in 1987, then left the country because of his political ideals to play in Paraguay and a lower division team in Spain before returned to Uruguay in 1985 to play for Wanderers and then Penarol with whom he won the 1987 Libertadores Cup while he also captained the national team which won the South American Championship that year. Curiously always plays in tracksuit bottoms. Good between the posts, but not so good coming out. Reflexes slowing a bit, but now doing well as regular with Argentine champions, Independiente.

Fernando ALVEZ. Goalkeepr. Aged 30 (born September 4, 1959) of Penarol, with 14 caps. Outstanding, the best in Uruguay for the last 15 years, but is not very keen on training and has had numerous injuries which have kept him sidelined for so long.

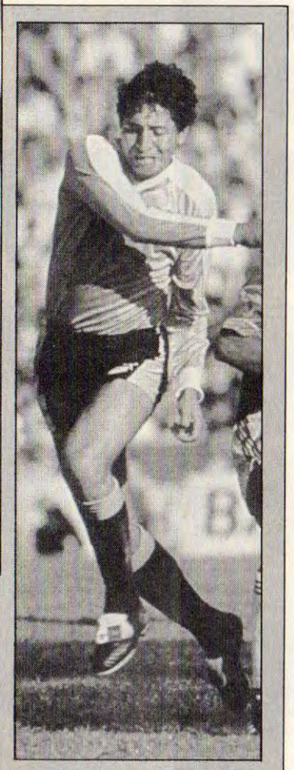
Oscar FERRO. Goalkeeper. Aged 23 (born March 2, 1967) with 2 caps. Penarol. Stood out with Uruguayan junior selection and coach Tabarez has always said he would be Uruguay's World Cup goalkeeper in 1990, but has had little experience.

Jose HERRERA. Flank defender. Aged 25 (born June 17, 1965) with 24 caps. Figueras (Spain). Good with dead ball situations. Better when doing up into attack than defending as is poor marker.

Hugo DE LEON. Central defender. Aged 32 (born February 27, 1958) with 40 caps. River Plate (Argentina). Safe, but slowing down after long career, also in Brazil. Cumbersome because of his size.

Danie RE VELEZ. Defender. Aged 30 (born August 30, 1959) with 10 caps. Nacional. Strong, but slow. Good at heading.

Ruben Paz – skilful but inconsistent. Right: Jose Perdomo.



URUGUAY

CONTINUED

Jorge GONCALVEZ. Central defender. Aged 23 (born March 2, 1967) with 6 caps. Penarol. Son of famous Penarol midfielder of the 60s, Nestor, he is a good header, but slow and with little technique.

Alfonso DOMINGUEZ. Defender. Aged 24 (born September 24, 1965) with 23 caps. Penarol. Excellent marker and safe, but a bit on the small side which could be a problem against European teams playing physical soccer.

Nelson GUTIERREZ. Central defender. Aged 28 (born April 13, 1962) with 51 caps. Verona (Italy). A born leader, strong, good in the air, but slow.

Jose PINTOS SALDANHA. Flank defender. Aged 26 (born March 25, 1964) with 16 caps. Nacional. Fast and good marker with technique, but a bit on the small side.

Nelson CABRERA. Defender. Aged 22 (born July 18, 1967) with 7 caps. Danubio. Small, but good marker and strong, but little experience.

Santiago OSTOLAZA. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born July 10, 1962) with 28 caps. Nacional. Good physique with a lot of energy and fighter, good in the air, but slow and ball control poor.

Ruben PEREIRA. Midfielder. Aged 22 (born January 28, 1968) with 16 caps. Danubio. Uruguay's most promising young player voted best player in 1988. A hard worker with good ball control.

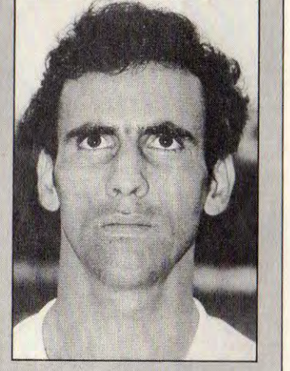
Jose PERDOMO. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born January 6, 1965) with 20 caps. Genova (Italy). The classic centre-half with good physique and good middle distance shot, but rough player and frequently sent off.

Ruben PAZ. Midfielder. Aged 30 (born August 8, 1959) with 38 caps. Genova (Italy). Good organiser and good with free kicks, but poor at marking and inconsistent frequently disappearing from the game.

Carlos CORREA. Midfielder. Aged 22 (born January 13, 1968) with 17 caps. Penarol. Attacking half with excellent ball play, but slow.

Pablo BENGOECHEA. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born June 27, 1965) with 23 caps. Seville (Spain). A good ball player with an eye for goals and a good marker. A revelation in Uruguay when he first came to the forefront.

Sergio MARTINEZ. Midfielder. Aged 21 (born February 15, 1969) with 12 caps. Defensor Sporting. The youngest player in the squad and he certainly deserves his place. Excellent player with great precision, a good finisher and fast – a problem for any defence, but a bit on the small side. Son of an international – Carlos of the 1967 South American Championship winning side. A great prospect.



Carlos AGUILERA. Forward. Aged 25 (born September 21, 1964) with 48 caps. A regular since 1982 when he came into the national team at only 17. A dangerous scorer and outstanding finisher (of half chances) with a great eye for goal, he has scored 21 goals in the national team and has been leading scorer wherever he went, also now in Italy with Genova.

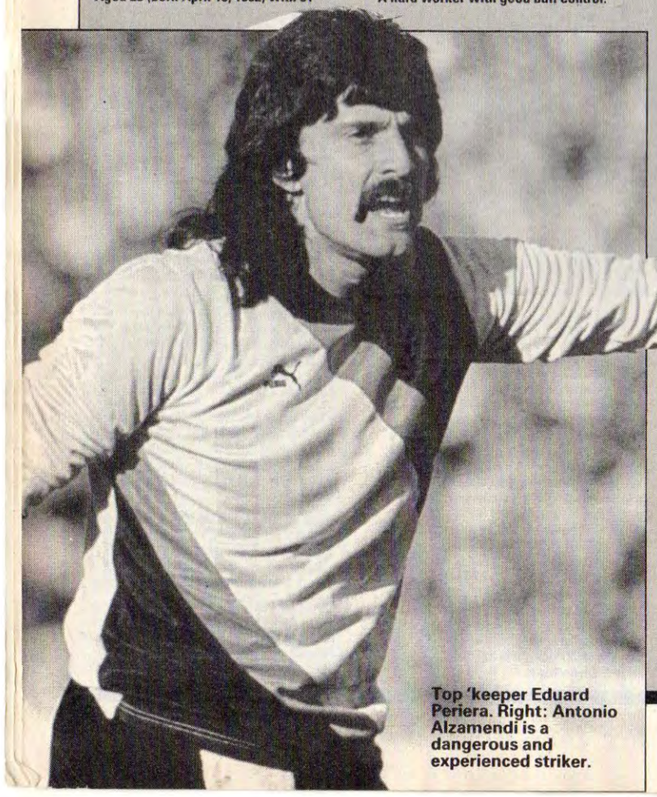
William CASTRO. Forward. Aged 28 (born May 5, 1962) with 7 caps. Nacional. Agile, but completely left-footed.

Ruben DA SILVA. Forward. Aged 22 (born April 11, 1968) with 11 caps. River Plate (Argentina). An excellent player, good organiser and dangerous scorer, specially in the goal area and very agile.

Antonio ALZAMENDI. Forward. Aged 34 (born June 7, 1956) with 25 caps. Logrones (Spain). Dangerous and experienced scorer with hard shot, fast in spite of age and good at finding open spaces for clear runs to goal.

Enzo FRANCESCOLI. Forward. Aged 28 (born November 12, 1961) with 40 caps. Marseilles (France). A great playmaker who invents moves and scores a lot of goals. Could be one of the stars in Italy.

Ruben SOSA. Forward. Aged 24 (born April 25, 1966) with 24 caps obtained in barely two years. Lazio (Italy). The brightest star in the Uruguayan team lately – fast, agile, with hard left foot shot, voted the best player at last year's South American Championship and leading scorer in last year's World Cup qualifying games when he often saved his low scoring team.



Top 'keeper Eduard Periera. Right: Antonio Alzamendi is a dangerous and experienced striker.

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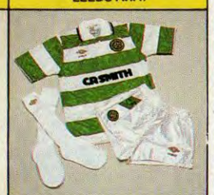

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ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

SPAIN

SUAREZ BOYS ARE ONLY AN OUTSIDE BET

BY GRAHAM TURNER

Real Madrid star Martin Vazquez is wanted by a number of the top Italian clubs.

SPAIN'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	8	2	2	4	6	8
Austria	10	5	3	2	19	16
Belgium	15	5	5	5	26	18
Brazil	6	1	1	4	5	11
Colombia	1	0	1	0	1	1
Czechoslovakia	10	3	1	6	7	11
England	16	4	2	10	19	35
Holland	7	4	1	2	14	8
Italy	22	6	8	8	21	31
Rep. of Ireland	21	12	5	4	44	16
Rumania	11	4	4	3	18	13
Scotland	10	4	3	3	16	16
Soviet Union	4	2	1	1	5	3
Sweden	8	3	3	2	11	11
United States	1	1	0	0	3	1
Uruguay	4	1	3	0	5	3
West Germany	15	4	4	7	16	21
Yugoslavia	14	6	4	4	14	12

ONCE again the Spaniards head for a World Cup among the select band who, according to the international pundits, have a half-decent chance of winning it.

Significantly though, the bookmakers are offering only luke-warm odds on Luis Suarez's team. After all, they've seen it all before. This will be Spain's fourth consecutive World Cup finals, but they have yet to make an impact. Even as hosts in 1982 with unimpeachable support from the public and some tailor-made refereeing, Santamaria's side bowed meekly out with one win in five games.

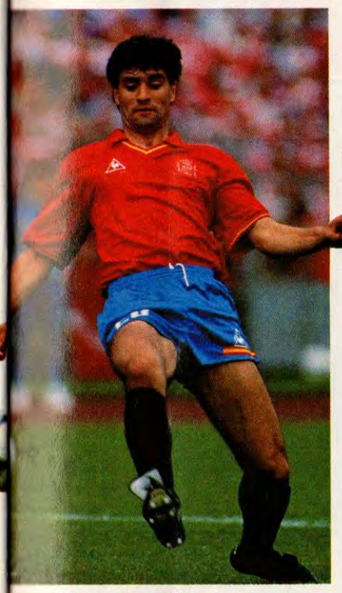
In Mexico a stunning 5-1 win over Denmark with four goals from Emilio Butragueno at last impressed the critics and was enough to install both Butragueno and Michel on the European podium that year. But the bubbles again burst in a 1-1 draw with Belgium and a missed penalty by Eloy sending Miguel Munoz's muchachos back home.

It's been the same old story in the European championships. Spain were in every final phase during the 1980s, but the final statement shows only two victories in 11 games played. Their best performance, of course, was in 1984 when, having qualified for the finals with a barely-credible 12-1 against Malta, they went on to lose the final 2-0 to Michel Platini's impressive French side. Even then Spain managed just one win the whole competition – a last-minute header by Maceda which beat West Germany when the Spaniards had their bags packed for a return home.

In 1988 Spain's only success was a 3-2 win over Denmark.

Their anonymity in major competitions has been used as ammunition against the talented band of Real Madrid players – Butragueno, Michel, Sanchis and Martin Vazquez – who neither in the white shirt of their club nor in the red shirt of the national team have been able to add enough fibre to their technical brilliance to warrant international honours.

Against this backdrop, Spain head for Italy aiming to cast aside the ifs, the buts and the old refrain of QUIZAS, QUIZAS, QUIZAS and with the intention of fulfilling some of their long-dormant promises.



Playmaker – Michel.

So far Suarez has done an impressive job since taking over from Munoz in the summer of 1988, albeit in a not-too-demanding qualifying group alongside Malta, Northern Ireland, Hungary and the Republic of Ireland. On the credit side their tally of 20 goals in eight games was among the healthiest in Europe, while the outstanding entry in the debit column was a 1-0 defeat in Dublin when Suarez's side showed little appetite for a robust, physical game.

Like his Italian counterpart Azeglio Vicini, Suarez reached the top flight via the under-21s and, like Vicini, has based his current side on many of the former disciples who reached the final of the European Championship in 1986. On that occasion, Suarez beat Vicini after extra time and penalties ...

As a result, the currentsquad is full of youth, hunger and enthusiasm, but – even though as many as eight squad members could be Mexico survivors – short on experience. The average is barely 15 caps and 10 of the probable squad have under a dozen.

Suarez has been working hard to solve problems that have perplexed his predecessors – finding the right attacking partner for Emilio 'The Vulture' Butragueno at the head of his list. Spain's Vulture Culture had hitherto been based on teaming him up with a target man such as Julio Salinas, whereas Suarex now consistently opts for Manolo, another short, stocky, pacy player who scores more regulary for Spain than he does for Atletico Madrid and who claims to enjoy his football more in the national team.

In defence, Suarez seemed to be veering towards a five-man formation based on Real Madrid's system of a sweeper, two markers and two attacking full-backs pushed up into midfield. But in recent games he has opted to field a more traditional four-man defence plus Barcelona's Luis Milla in a deep-lying role as midfield pivot. With the emphasis on speed and ball-skills rather than brute force up front, it was no coincidence that midfielder Michel was Spain's top scorer last year. But with midfielders urged to get forward, it became obvious when Spain threw away a 0-2 lead against Hungary that there was a serious danger of reckless over-revving which left the side brutally exposed to counter-attacks. Anchor-man Milla is Suarez's answer.

Milla is one of 19 players who made their international debuts during the first 15 months of the Suarez regime, and it may reflect his reservations about the habitual partnerhip of Andrinua andSanchis that six of them have been central defenders (Patxi Salinas of Bilbao, Patxi Ferreira of Atletico Madrid, Alberto Gorriz of Real Sociedad, Ricardo Serna of Barcelona, Juanito Rodriguez of Zaragoza and Luis Manuel of Oviedo.

Manola saves his best displays for the national side.

While Andoni Zubizarreta, the daddy of the side with nearly 50 caps, is a fixture between the posts, the fierce competition in midfield means more headaches for Suarez, although Michel, Roberto and Milla are favourites to line up alongside a Martin Vazquez who has answered "goal-shy" taunts by hitting double figures for Real this season for the first time in his career.

Early form

Spain's long-term prospects in the finals could hinge on their opening Group E match against Uruguay, where following the conversative axiom of 'avoiding defeat' may not be good enough. Anything other than first place in the group would line them up for an immediate confrontation with Holland, Italy or West Germany if the first round has any resemblance to the form book.

Suarez's side is not short of incentives. They will pocket £22,000 a piece if they reach the last 16. £17,000 more if they reach the quarter-finals. £23,000 more if they qualify for the semi-finals. £33,500 extra if they reach the final. Plus £55,000 if they win it. Suarez himself stands to receive double those amounts.

THE MANAGER

Luis SUAREZ. Aged 54 (born May 2, 1935). Rated the best inside-forward Spain has ever produced. European Footballer of the Year in 1960, runner-up in 1961 and 1964 and third in 1965. Suarez was signed by Barcelona in 1954 after shining for his local side Deportivo La Coruna. After seven years of vying with Ladislao Kubala for pride of place in the hearts of Barcelona fans, he was sold to Inter Milan in 1961; moved on to Sampdoria in 1970; and hung up his boots in 1973 having won two Leagues, two Cups and two Fairs Cups with Barcelona; four Leagues, two European Cups and two Intercontinental Cups with Inter; plus 32 caps and the 1964 European Championship for Spain. His managerial career has been less distinguished to the extent of lasting only one season at the Genoa youth side, Inter, Cagliari, Como and Spal plus a sentimental return to La Coruna, all between 1975 and 1980. Joining the Federation coaching staff in 1980, he finally made his mark by leading the Under-21s to European glory in 1986 and, since taking over the 'A' team from Miguel Munoz after the 1988 European Championships his record is a case of "so far so good".

THE SQUAD

Andoni ZUBIZARRETA. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born October 23, 1961) with 47 caps. Barcelona. Sober and solid, with a Peter Shilton build, 'Zubi' was coached at Bilbao by his childhood idol, the former international keeper Iribar. Was a controversial £750,000 signing from Bilbao during Terry Venables' reign in 1986, and the Barcelona fans initially gave him a rough time. Now undisputedly the best keeper in Spain and the most-capped member of Suarez's squad. Won two Leagues and a Cup at Bilbao, and made his international debut on January 23, 1985 when he replaced Luis Arconada at half-time in Spain's 3-1 win over Iceland.

Jose Manuel OCHOTORENA. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born January 16, 1961) with one cap. Valencia. Another Basque goalkeeper whose family moved from San Sebastian to Madrid when he was 15. Joined Real Madrid's nursery side Castilla three years later, but after years in the shadows, opted for first-team football at Valencia two years ago. Safe and unspectacular, won the Zamora award for the least-beaten keeper last year and hit the national team against Poland last September.

Juan Carlos ABLANEDO. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born September 2, 1963) with two caps. Sporting Gijon. Answers questions about his stature (he barely nudges 5ft 9ins) with agility, reflexes and exceptional handling. Joined Sporting at 11, made his first-team debut at 19 and won the Zamora award in his first full season (1984-85) conceding 21 goals in 34 games. Now recovered from a serious ligament injury.

Miguel Porlan CHENDO. Right-back. Aged 28 (born October 12, 1961) with 20 caps. Real Madrid. Wanted to go straight back home to Murcia when Real took him to Madrid as a Youth player. Now a fast, quick-tackling, attacking full-back who's the envy of most Spanish managers. Wears knee bandage as lucky charm. Has sad

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SPAIN

CONTINUED

memories of Mexico, where he celebrated the birth of his son, only for the baby to die in a car accident on his return.

Manuel JIMENEZ. Left-back. Aged 26 (born January 21, 1964) with 12 caps. Sevilla. A surprise choice to make his debut on his home ground against Argentina in October 1988 but, with encouragement from Suarez, has developed into an international-class, fast aggressive, tough-tackling full-back who leaves less space at his back than predecessor Gordillo. Made the Sevilla first team in 1985 and has recently been accused by the manager of saving himself for Italy.

Manual SANCHIS. Central defender. Aged 24 (born May 23, 1965) with 28 caps. Real Madrid. Spain's first division managers recently voted him the country's best footballer. Son of the former Real star, 'Manolo' is fast, skilful, aggressive in the tackle and excellent in the air, especially going forward – and he can play anywhere in defence or midfield. Joined Real at 13 and scored a crucial goal in Murcia during his first team debut alongside Martin Vazquez in December 1983. Surprisingly, 'Eyebrows' was left out of the Mexico squad.

Genaro ANDRINUA. Central defender. Aged 25 (born May 9, 1964) with 22 caps. Athletic Bilbao. The Basque club has fought to keep this tall, elegant defender who plays stopper for his club and often as sweeper for the national team. The six-footer started as a goalkeeper but his father convinced him he'd have more chance of a pro career if he switched to outfield. The 'Basque Beckenbauer' made his first-team debut as a 19-year-old, was loaned out to Valladolid for the 1985-86 season and is now the idol of the Bilbao fans.

'JUANITA' Juan Rodriguez. Central Defender. Aged 24 (born May 10, 1965) with two caps. Zaragoza. The former Las Palmas sweeper celebrated his international debut against Hungary last November with a superbly struck goal from a free kick and now looks set for Italy. His career has taken off since moving from Las Palmas to Zaragoza in 1987 and the strongly-built, skilful defender is being linked with Real Madrid.

'QUIQUE' Enrique Sanchez Flores. Full-back. Aged 25 (born February 2, 1965) with 10 caps. Valencia. Looked a permanent fixture until two serious knee injuries interrupted his career. Nephew of Spain's most famous female flamenco singer, Quique is a rare specimen – a defensive ball-artist. Prefers the right, but can operate on either flank. Turned down by both top clubs in his native Madrid, his exceptional ball skills and attacking runs have been a major factor in Valencia's impressive recent campaigns.

TOMAS Renones. Full-back. Aged 29 (born August 9, 1960) with 19 caps. Atletico Madrid. Short, stocky and swarthy, he's the prototype of the tough man-to-man marker who knows all the tricks. Operates on either flank and has the pace to work the whole touchline. Made his first division debut in September 1984 and won his first cap against Austria in November 1985. Played all five games in Mexico.

Alberto GORRIZ. Central defender. Aged 32 (born February 16, 1958) with three caps. Real Sociedad. Could scrape into the squad through Suarez's worries about lack of height at the back. If he does, he'll be the oldest and tallest of the squad. Is rarely beaten in the air and is dangerous at set pieces. Joined Real at Youth level and has been a first-team regular for 11 years.

'MICHEL' Michel Gonzalez. Midfield. Aged 27 (born March 23, 1963) with 41 caps. Real Madrid. A superstar who joined Real at 13, took five years to get out of the nursery side Castilla because his game lacked steel and endeavour, and who now earns over £500,000 year. Supremely gifted technically, his long-range shooting is so accurate that it's difficult to believe he's shortsighted enough to need glasses. Asked to leave Real last summer complaining of being victimised by demanding fans, and has had a mixed season. Spain's top scorer during the qualifiers.

Rafael MARTIN VAZQUEZ. Midfield. Aged 24 (born September 25, 1965) with 20 caps. Real Madrid. Has upstaged Michel this season amid offers from Italy as he nears the end of his contract. Menotti predicted he'd be a world-beater and Di Stefano blooded him in the first team at 17. But 20 goals in six seasons and a blank sheet in 29 European games labelled him a skilful fighter who lacked a punch. Has blossomed in Toshack's new system and has hit double figures this season for the first time in his career.

ROBERTO Fernandez. Midfield. Aged 26 (born July 9, 1963) with 20 caps. Barcelona. Born near Castellon, made the grade at Valencia and joined Terry Venables' Barcelona for £500,000 in 1986. The lynch pin of Suarez's Under-21 side, he is now a firm fixture in the 'A' team. Industrious, a good defender (Cruyff has even played him at left-back), good in the air and disciplined, he's the ideal foil for the more ephemeral midfield skills of Michel and company.

Luis MILLA. Midfield. Aged 24 (born March 12, 1966) with three caps. Barcelona. After years of being considered too frail for top-class soccer, the Teruel-born midfielder has shot to fame since slotting into Cruyff's system as the distributor and pivot in front of the defence. Exceptional technique allows him to play simple, one-touch football which keeps the whole team buzzing. Cruyff signed Ronald Koeman to replace him, but it speaks volumes that Milla has retained his place.

EUSEBIO Sacristan. Midfield. Aged 25 (born April 13, 1964) with eight caps. Barcelona. Former Valladolid and Atletico Madrid ball-player who has improved since £450,000 transfer to Barcelona in 1988. In Cruyff's team he has added positional discipline and defensive work to his creative role as right-side midfielder and his skills and vision disguise his lack of pace.

Top in Spain – Sanchis.

FERNANDO Gomez. Midfield. Aged 24 (born September 11, 1965) with one cap. Valencia. A product of the club's Youth Scheme now valued at £2m. Seemingly quiet and timid, but a forceful presence in midfield. Skilful and competent in the air and although not pacy gets forward to score goals. Scored on his debut against Hungary last November.

Francisco Javier VILLARROYA. Midfield. Aged 23 (born August 6, 1966) with five caps. Zaragoza. Left-sided defender/midfielder who has burst into the national side after an outstanding season in Raddy Antic's Zaragoza. Now linked with Real Madrid didn't make his league debut until March 1988, but won his first cap 18 months later against Poland.

MANOLO Sanchez. Forward. Aged 25 (born January 17, 1965) with 11 caps. Atletico Madrid. A Speedy, industrious inside-forward who saves his best displays for the red shirt of Spain. Reached Atletico via modest clubs Cacereno, Sabadell and Murcia and responded to Suarez's surprise call in November 1988 with a debut goal against the Republic of Ireland and has carried on with almost a goal per game.

Emilio BUTRAGUENO. Forward. Aged 26 (born August 22, 1963) with 45 caps. Real Madrid. Idol of the Real fans. 'The Vulture' is the golden boy of Spanish soccer who has yet to come good in a major competition, despite four goals against Denmark in Mexico and two third-placings in the European poll in 1986 and 1987. Failed a trial at Real when he was 17 and was invited to join Atletico. His dad objected and he finally made the grade at Real by scoring twice in his league debut in Cadiz in February 1984. When he was dropped by Leo Beenhakker last season it all but caused a revolution in Madrid. Lying deeper this year. his close control and acceleration have wreaked even more havoc.

Vulture Culture – Butragueno.

JUIO SALINAS. Forward. Aged 27 (born September 11, 1962) with 24 caps. Barcelona. If he were a basketball player we could say he's all fingers and thumbs. Tall, gangling and seemingly clumsy, but he shields the ball brilliantly, beats defenders by sheer unorthodoxy and his striking rate at Bilbao, Atletico Madrid and Barcelona has been steadily impressive even though, under Cruyff, he's been forced to follow Gary Lineker's trail out on the right.

Jose Maria BAKERO. Forward. Aged 27 (born February 11, 1963) with 11 caps. Barcelona. Would have earned more caps but for serious cruciate ligament and ankle injuries. Was top scorer for John Toshack's Real Sociedad before his controversial £1.5m sale to Barcelona in 1988. Cuts down the frills but never stops working and his non-stop movement creates whirlpools in the opposing defensive zone.

Miguel PARDEZA. Winger. Aged 25 (born February 8, 1965) with two caps. Zaragoza. After an outstanding league campaign he may edge into the squad ahead of Beguiristain, Felipe or Eloy. The diminutive right or left winger grew up with Butragueno at Real Madrid but after a spell on loan to Zaragoza, decided to stay there after failing to hold down a place in Beenhakker's Real. Nippy, and excellent dribbler and scores goals.

ELOY Olaya. Winger. Aged 25 (born July 10, 1964) with 14 caps. Valencia. Signed from Gijon two years ago, 'Smurf' has returned to top form this season after a run of injuries. Fast, skilful and a good finisher. he's been in and out of the national team. In Mexico he missed the penalty which meant elimination for Spain against Belgium.

WORLD SOCCER, APRIL 1990

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

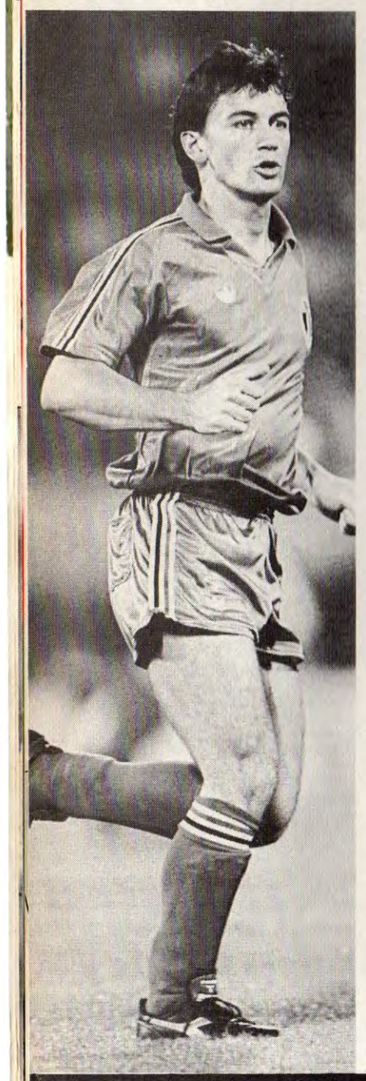
BELGIUM

MEEUWS SACKED–SO BACK COMES THYS

BY IAIN MACLEOD

BELGIUM'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	4	1	0	3	4	10
Austria	12	1	2	9	12	37
Brazil	3	1	0	2	6	8
Czechoslovakia	8	2	1	5	11	19
England	18	1	4	13	24	68
Holland	116	38	25	53	203	262
Italy	15	2	2	11	15	32
Rep. Ireland	12	4	4	4	22	22
Rumania	5	3	0	2	8	5
Scotland	13	7	2	4	22	19
Soviet Union	5	1	0	4	5	10
Spain	15	5	5	5	18	26
Sweden	12	5	2	5	18	29
Uruguay	1	1	0	0	2	0
USA	1	0	0	1	0	3
Yugoslavia	11	4	2	5	15	17
W. Germany	17	4	1	12	22	42



Marc Degryse leads Belgium's charge.

SACKING World Cup managers is threatening to become an epidemic.

First the United Arab Emirates release Mario Zagalo; then Costa Rica dismissed Marvin Rodriguez; finally – Belgium parted company with Walter Meeuws. Their solution was the safe one of returned to Guy Thys. Thys had been manager for 13 years from 1976 to 1989 when he retired and handed over to Meeuws his erstwhile assistant. But, as forecast in World Soccer, Meeuws attracted an increasing storm of suspicion and opposition. The dire last World Cup tie, a 1-1 home draw against Luxembourg, has been followed this year by a friendly defeat in Greece and a stultifying goalless home draw against Sweden, Meeuws was left with no option but to step aside.

Belgium's problems have to some degree been compounded by the tremendous success which the nation's clubs have had in this season's European club competitions. With no guarantee of free dates Meeuws had been unable to fix any further international matches until May, when Belgium play three times in ten days.

The inactivity is something the squad can well do without. Anyone who witnessed the drab draw against Sweden in Brussels, would immediately have queried Belgium's desire to play from the heart.

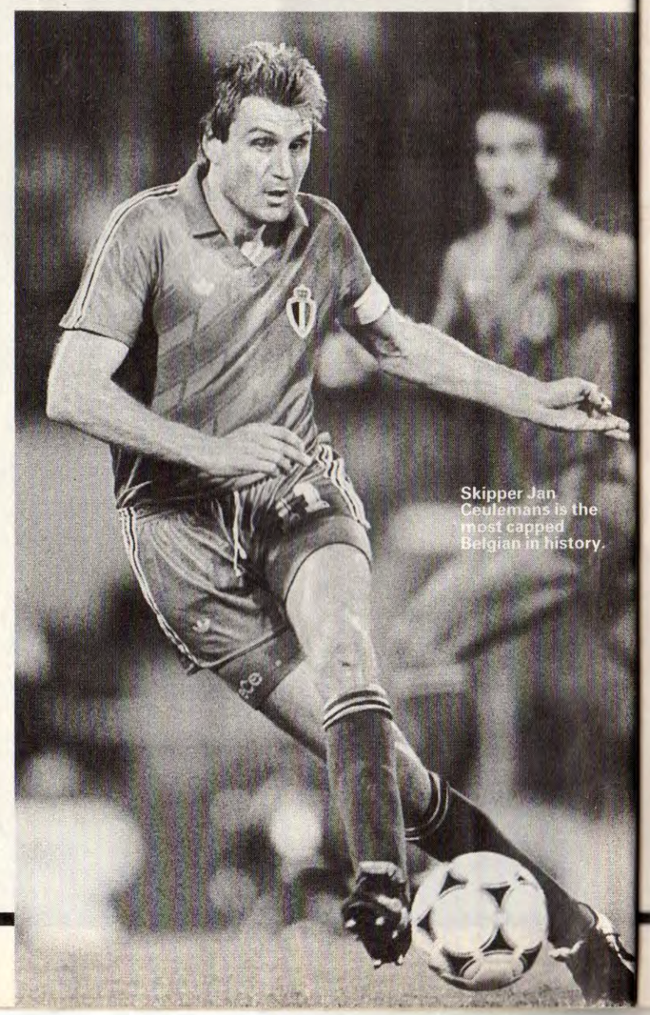
Belgium were fortunate to avoid defeat and their fabled defence had little of the invulnerability of old.

Recent results offer further evidence of how, after a bright start to what was an extremely tough World Cup qualifying group, Belgium slumped to an alarming degree: a 2-2 draw with Switzerland was followed by one of the Diables Rouges worst games in the past 20 years – a 1-1 home draw against tiny Luxembourg, the Grand Duchy's first World Cup point since 1973.

Meeuws quickly lost the confidence of the players. The omens then as now, were not good.

THE MANAGER

Guy THYS. Aged 67 (born December 6, 1922). Recalled in emergency after the departure of Walter Meeuws after only eight months as Thys' supposed successor. Thys spent 11 years as a player with Beerschot, forming a dangerous attacking partnership with the famous Rik Coppens in the early 1950s. Later played for Standard Liege and Cercle Brugge before retiring. Coached Beveren, Union Saint-Gilloise and Antwerp before succeeding Raymond Goethals as national manager in 1977. Thys rebuilt the squad, using many of the European youth championship winners from 1976. But while players such as Ceulemans and Vandenbergh established themselves, Belgium's international revival would not have been as dramatic had Thys not been able to persuade veteran midfield general Wilfried Van Moer out of international retirement to coax them to runners-up spot in the 1980 European championship. Confidence now established, Belgium went on to reach the 1982 World Cup finals second round and Thys then worked hard and successfully to overcome the upset caused by the 1983-4 match-fixing scandal which robbed him of half-a-dozen senior men (including, ironically Meeuws) on the eve of the European finals. Before the last World Cup finals he signed a contract extension which he duly earned by taking Belgium to fourth place in Mexico, their best-ever World Cup finish. Thys retired last summer after 101 internationals in charge and accepted a senior, backseat role on the national team committee.



Skipper Jan Ceulemans is the most capped Belgian in history.

Meeuws had already worked as Thys' assistant for over a year. He had a fine record as a superb defensive organiser who was the pivotal figure in the Belgian team which finished second in the 1980 European Championships.

But Meeuws also had a skeleton in the cupboard: he had been a prominent figure in the infamous bribes scandal which broke shortly before the 1984 European Championships, saw a dozen players from Standard Liege and Waterschei implicated, and Thys' famous defensive formation thrown to the judicial wolves.

Meeuws may have been forgiven but the affair has not been forgotten and lingers. Although the players have been reticent in publicising the matter for fear of jeopardising their ticket to Italy, the aftermath of the Luxembourg game threw up a host of rumours about dissatisfaction in the ranks: player-power threatened Meeuws' job.

Meeuws, in tampering with a time-honoured system of proven value to the Belgians had classically fallen between two stools. Placing more emphasis on attack was almost alien to the Belgains whose great strength, defensive reliability had served the nation well for over a decade.

With the indications of a defensively-orientated competition in which the ability to defend well and counter-attack quickly will be a valuable art to have, Thys' unique chessboard skills can galvanise a team which is brimful with quality players.

There is no shortage of experience and Belgium, as they are apt to do, should prove masters of the shut-out. Captain Jan Ceulemans remains a hugely inspirational figure and with a new, and potent, striking duo in the form of Marc Degryse and Marc Van der Linden displaying a superb understanding, for Anderlecht and Belgium, the need for all-round cohesian is particularly important.

Given all Belgium's problems at present, the prospects for a repeat of 1986, when they finished fourth, do not look particularly hopeful.

THE SQUAD

Michel PREUD'HOMME. Goalkeeper. Aged 31 (born January 24, 1959) with 20 caps. Mechelen. Implicated with coach Meeuws in bribery scandal but through hard work and dedication fought his way back to national recognition. Previously with Standard Liege he was Belgian Footballer of the Year in 1987. Made his international debut against Austria in May, 1979. Came up from the junior ranks and was a youth international around the time when Belgium boasted one of the finest under-18 teams in Europe.

Filip DE WILDE. Goalkeeper. Aged 25 (born July 25, 1964) with two caps. Anderlecht. Another youth international who is now the third choice goalkeeper. Enjoying renewed confidence as Anderlecht restore pride in the club with some fine performances under new coach de Mos. Made his international debut against Denmark last August, and previously played for Beveren.

Gilbert BODART. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born September 2, 1962) with five caps. Standard Liege. Second choice keeper for the national team, he got the opportunity to establish himself when Preud'homme was suspended in the wake of the bribery revelations in 1984. Began his career with CS Verlaine and has been capped at Olympic, under-21 and senior level.

Philippe ALBERT. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 10, 1967) with five caps. Mechelen. Began his career with Royal Standard Bouillon, then joined Charleroi where he attracted the attention of all the leading clubs, eventually opting to sign for Belgain champions Mechelen. Has staked a claim to a place in the national team with consistently good displays as a defensive midfielder. Like Bodart he has earned caps at three levels and made his international debut in the 2-2 draw with the Republic of Ireland in 1987. One of the emerging young breed who will form the framework of the defence after the World Cup.

Nico BROECKAERT. Defender. Aged 29 (born November 23, 1960) with two caps. Antwerp. A high experienced defender from Zottingen who began his career with the local club before moving on to Kortrijk. Because of the sheer volume of defensive talent he has found it difficult to gain a regular place, and having made his debut against Denmark has only added one further cap to that tally. Enjoying a fine season with title challengers Antwerp and a good, solid player to have in reserve.

Leo CLYSTERS. Defender. Aged 33 (born November 6, 1956) with 33 caps. Mechelen. A long-time stalwart of the formidable Diables Rouges defence, this highly experienced player is now with his seventh club. Enjoyed some success during his time at Waterschei when the club reached the semi-finals of the European Cup-winners Cup. With the bribery scandal decimating the side he was called into the squad for the 1984 European Championships. Made his debut against East Germany in 1983, and went to Mexico last time out. Has scored one international goal and testimony to his talent was offered when he was named Belgian Footballer of the Year in 1988.

Stephane Demol can operate equally well in defence or midfield.

Stephane DEMOL. Defender. Aged 24 (born March 11, 1966) with 26 caps. FC Porto. A versatile and class player who can perform equally well either in defence or in midfield. Previously with Bologna in Italy, and Anderlecht, he joined Porto in the summer of 1989, where he has settled well. Now a regular in the Belgian team, he can turn a tricky defensive situation into a quick counter-attack with considerable ease. Enjoys the more sedate pace of the Portuguese game but adapts with ease to the demands of international football. Made his debut against Bulgaria in a 2-0 victory in 1986 and has scored one goal.

Jean-Francois DE SART. Defender. Aged 28 (born December 18, 1961) with three caps. FC Liege. A latecomer to the international scene, de Sart made his debut against Yugoslavia in May, 1989, at the age of 27. Has been capped twice since, principally because of his fine performances with Liege who surprised many in Europe by their fine UEFA Cup performances. De Sart is particulary dangerous with long range efforts and gave a superb demonstration of this when he scored the goal that beat Hibernian last autumn.

Michel DE WOLF. Defender. Aged 32 (born January 19, 1958) with 24 caps. Kortrijk. A seasoned campaigner who first played for Belgium back in 1980, when Thys was beginning to blood fresh talent to consolidate the side's fine showing at the European championships where they finished second. Previously with RWDM and Ghent since making his debut against Ireland, he has played in the finals of the 1984 European Championships and 1986 World Cup finals.

Eric GERETS. Defender. Aged 35 (born May 18, 1954) with 77 caps. PSV Eindhoven. An outstanding full back who has had a world class pedigree for almost 15 years. Likes to attack and has scored twice for Belgium since his debut against East Germany in 1975. Spent much of his career with Standard Liege where he enjoyed considerable success and captained the side when they lost to Barcelona in the 1982 European Cup-winners Cup final. Had an outstanding European Championship in 1980, when Belgian Footballer of the Year in 1982. Was implicated in the 1984 bribes scandal and missed the

BELGIUM

CONTINUED

European Championships, but was forgiven in time to play a major part in Belgium's superb performance in Mexico where they finished fourth. Had brief spells with Milan and Maastricht, before finding a new lease of life in Eindhoven where he won a European Cup winners medal in 1988.

Georges GRUN. Aged 28 (born January 25, 1962) with 44 caps. Anderlecht. A player who successfully made the transition from striker to defender, his time as a forward clearly was not wasted and he puts his attacking skills to good effect when pushing forward. His versatility is particularly advantageous in a Belgian side where defence and midfield are especially important.He has scored three times for the national team and became an overnight hero when he scored the goal in Rotterdam which enabled Belgium to go to the 1986 World Cup finals at the expense of bitter rival Holland. Made his debut against Yugoslavia and has gone on to earn more than 40 caps for his country. A vital member of the Anderlecht team he is considered no less important at national level and his experience will be a major asset in Italy.

Franky VAN DER ELST. Midfield. Aged 30 (born on April 30, 1961) with 34 caps. Club Brugge. A versatile midfielder who can defend and play his part in attack, Van Der Elst was a crucial figure as Belgium sought to re-build following the 1984 match-fixing scandal. Previously with Molenbeek, he has spent the better part of his career in the famous mediaeval town. He benefited from the scandal and unexpectedly found himself shoring up a fresh Belgian back four in the aftermath of the disastrous 1984 European championships. Made his debut against Greece at at the end of '84 and was prominent in the 1986 World Cup finals. No relation to the more famous Francois of earlier times.

Marc EMMERS. Midfield. Aged 24 (born February 25, 1966) with 14 caps. Mechelen. A former youth international he made his first appearance in national colours during a friendly in Israel in January 1988. Formerly with Waterschei, his move to Mechelen has improved his national profile. Has won European Cup-winners Cup and Belgian league medals during his time there and is clearly one for the future. Is highly regarded for his tactical astuteness and toughness in the tackle.

Enzo SCIFO. Midfield. Aged 24 (born February 19, 1966) with 36 caps. Auxerre. Belgium's most famous teenage prodigy. Scifo has not always fulfilled his remarkable potential. Made his name with Anderlecht where, as a precocious 18-year-old he was blooded against Hungary at the 1984 European Championships. At the end of that season he also received the award for Belgium's Footballer of the Year. His talent – and his Italian ancestry – attracted the attention of the rich Latin clubs and was transferred to Inter Milan, a move that did not work out favourably. Scifo took time to get himself sorted out but a move to France, first to Bordeaux, then to present club, Auxerre, has resusitated his career. Played a prominent part in Belgium's success in Mexico and has scored five times in national colours.

Bruno VERSAVEL. Midfield. Aged 22 (born August 27, 1967) with 11 caps. Mechelen. Another versatile player who can switch between defence and midfield, he previously played for Diest and Lokeren. A youth international who also gained Olympic honours, he made his senior debut against Brazil in the autumn of 1988. Seems set to play a prominent role in future and has scored once for Belgium.

Patrick VERVOORT. Midfield. Aged 25 (born January 17, 1965) with 26 caps. Anderlecht. Formerly with Beerschot, he joined Anderlecht in 1987 and having enjoyed a particulary good World Cup finals in Mexico in 1986, has established himself as one of Belgium's most important players. Formerly a left full back he is now to be found roaming the midfield and, although he doesn't score often – twice for Belgium – he does have a formidable reputation for scoring crucial long range free kicks.

Daniel VEYT. Midfield. Aged 33 (born December 9, 1956) with 12 caps. Gent. Now in the twilight of his career, having had varied success with Waregem and Liege before coming to Gent, Veyt, who made his international debut in the crucial World Cup qualifying match against Holland in Rotterdam in 1985, has quietly established himself in the national team. Came to prominence during Waregem's fine UEFA Cup run in 1986, and subsequently went on to produce a fine showing in the 1986 World Cup finals.

Jan CEULEMANS. Forward. Aged 33 (born February 28, 1957) with 87 caps. Club Brugge. Perhaps the most celebrated of all Belgian players, he certainly has only Van Himst to contend with for that particular honour. The most capped player in Belgium's history, he was a member of the superb youth team of the mid-1970's, before graduating to senior honour – his debut was against Holland in March, 1977. Has participated in two World Cup and two European Championship finals for Belgium, through time becoming their most influential and feared figure. He was Belgian Footballer of the Year in 1980 and 1985 and 1986 and has also topped the nation's goalscoring charts. His only previous club was Lierse whom he left in 1987 when Brugge paid a then record fee of £250,000 for a great talent who has shown tremendous loyalty to the Belgian game. Italy will almost certainly be his final appearance in a major championship and he will depart the the international scene hugely respected as the finest ambassador Belgian football has ever had.

Hans CHRISTJAENS. Forward. Aged 26 (born January 12, 1964) with one cap. Club Brugge. A clubmate of Ceulemans he has still to establish himself in the national team. Formerly with Beveren and Waregem, he made his international debut against Brazil in 1988.

Nico CLAESEN. Aged 27 (born October 1, 1962) with 34 caps. Antwerp. A much travelled footballer who is a gifted striker well equipped to handle the demands of international football. Began his career with Seraing, then had spells with Stuttgart, Standard Liege and Tottenham Hotspur, before settling in Antwerp where he has played a prominent part in that club's revival in recent seasons. Made his international debut against Scotland in October 1983 – the season in which he won the top scorers' crown in Belgium. Has a lot of experience and at 27, still has a big future in the national team.

Marc DEGRYSE. Aged 24. (born September 4, 1965) with 21 caps. Anderlecht. One of the new stars of the Belgian game. Previously with Club Brugge, he joined Anderlecht in the summer of 1989 for a domestic record fee of £1.5 million – a fee he has repaid many times having formed a lethal partnership with another new arrival at Parc Astrid – Marc Van der Linden. Was called up for the 1984 European Championships squad when only an uncapped 18-year-old, though he had to wait until September of that year before coach Thys gave him his first cap in a friendly against Argentina. Has been scoring freely for Anderlecht.

Luc NILIS. Aged 22 (born May 25, 1967) with 11 caps. Anderlecht. Another of the Anderlecht contingent who have enjoyed a fine season, Nilis is a name for the future who is regarded as one of Belgium's most talented young players. Has won honours at under-21, Olympic and senior level and made his debut against Hungary in the spring of 1988. Already a target for the major Italian clubs.

Francis SEVEREYNS. Aged 22 (born January 8, 1968) with five caps. Mechelen. Another potential long-term Belgian international, Severeyns has yet to establish his place in the national team though it can be only a matter of time. Is improving all the time and gains considerable experience from being a vital part of the successful Mechelen side of recent years. Despite his relatively youthful years he has already had a spell with Pisa in Italy, and remains a much sought after player.

Marc VAN DER LINDEN. Aged 26 (born February 4, 1964) with 15 caps. Anderlecht. One of the sensations of the Belgian season. Van Der Linden, who began his career with minor team Merksem, made his name with Antwerp, where his goalscoring feats soon attracted the attention of the major clubs. Moved to Anderlecht in the summer of 1989 to begin a partnership with Degryse, also newly-signed, which has been potent enough to make Anderlecht once again the major power in the land. Has the goalscorer's knack and, with Drgryse also his partner in the national team. Belgian hopes clearly rest with the hope that they can reproduce in a Belgian shirt what they have been doing all season in the mauve and white of Anderlecht. It is only recently that he has forced a regular spot in the national side, having made his debut back in 1983 against France.

The brilliant but inconsistent Enzo Scifo.

Michel de Wolf is set for his second World Cup finals.

ITALIA 90

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ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

SOUTH KOREA

ASIA'S BEST AIM TO SPREAD THEIR WINGS

SOUTH KOREA'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	2	0	1	1	2	5
Brazil	4	0	0	4	1	11
Cameroon	1	0	0	1	0	5
Colombia	1	1	0	0	5	2
Costa Rica	2	0	1	1	2	4
Czechoslovakia	5	0	2	3	4	13
Egypt	4	0	2	2	1	12
Italy	1	0	0	1	2	3
Soviet Union	1	0	1	0	0	0
Sweden	1	0	0	1	0	12
United Arab Emirates	3	2	1	0	5	3
Uruguay	1	0	1	0	2	2
USA	3	2	1	0	3	1
Yugoslavia	3	0	0	3	3	11

Kim Joo-sung, the Asian Player of the Year, 1989, is wanted by Austria's F.C. Tirol.

NOW established as the major power in Asian football, South Korea have set their sights upon becoming a competitive force at the highest level.

Having built a professional domestic infrastructure (albeit belatedly and somewhat reluctantly) and being, at long last, fully committed to success in the World Cup – the true barometer of international standing – they have a reasonable chance of success.

For many years, South Korea was know as "Yugoslavia of Asia". They have produced more truly talented players than any other nation on its continent, but handicapped themselves by imposing military training on all individuals and exporting the most gifted. To further hinder their chances of international success, the Koreans refused to field overseas based professionals. As a result, they came nowhere near to fulfilling their potential.

Even so, South Korea were always at the forefront on the Asian scene. They have won the Asian Championship twice and taken gold medals at the Asian Games on three occasions, but the greatest indication of perpetual strength comes from their continent's three major annual tournaments – the Merdeka Tournament, the King's Cup and the President's Cup. In all of these, their record is unrivalled.

The first three ventures beyond Asia proved disastrous. In the 1984 Olympics, Sweden administered a 12-0 hammering, at the World Cup finals six years later both Hungary (9-0) and Turkey (7-0) humiliated the Koreans and the Tokyo Olympics of 1964 saw Egypt demolish them 10-0.

Traditionally, Koreans have considered the Olympics to be of greater importance than the World Cup due to amateurism being cherished at all levels of the local game. Not until 1980 was professionalism tentatively introduced.

The first recorded football game in Korea was played by a British warship's crew members in 1882. Through the efforts of European technicians and missionaries, soccer had become educated Koreans' favourite sport by the time of the Japanese annexation in 1910. The game continued to flourish despite The Occupation and Seoul team All Keijyo is credited with being Japan's champion in 1935.

Korea launched a national championship of their own immediately after liberation in 1945. For 35 years, this was monopolised by teams attached to the military, universities and commercial concerns. All were strictly amateur.

Inevitably, better players were lured away to greener pastures. Ha Bum-Kun (Eintracht Frankfurt and Bayer Leverkusen), Chin Kook kim (Darstadt), Jeung Cho (Chicago Sting) and Jung Moog huh (PSV Eindhoven) are the best known Koreans to have appeared in the major leagues of Europe and North America. In addition, a host of their compatriots were engaged in Hong Kong during the 1960s and 1970s. All were barred from international duty upon leaving their native land.

Yet, it was not the loss of these stars which prompted the Korea Football Association to permit local players to receive payment. By the late 1970s, professional baseball had become a more popular spectator sport and, obviously, domestic football desperately needed re-packaging.

It was, curiously, a group of Christian evangelists whom got the professional ball rolling. In 1980, they established the Hallelujay club which initially toured Asia to participate in tournaments and play friendly games. Prior to each match, team members would form the shape of a cross, kneel down and pray. Their intention, club literature stated, was to "deliver Christian teachings all over the world through football."

By 1984, there were six professional clubs in existence and they formed The Superleague. This quickly evolved into South Korea's premier domestic competition.

Sadly, Hallelujay was disbanded a couple of years ago and, today, the League is contested by six clubs, all of whom are financed by the major industrial concerns whose names they carry – Yukong, Lucky Gold Star, Daewoo, Pohang, Ilwha and Hyundai.

The structure of the League has

changed a great deal in its short history, but one unique facet remains – most matches are played on neutral grounds, as the competition is taken to all significant provincial centres in an attempt to widen its popularity.

After attracting large crowds during its initial two seasons, the League has subsequently lost much spectator appeal. But, doubtless, it has done much to improve the overall standard of domestic football.

Nonetheless, collegiate tournaments still generate a great deal of public enthusiasm and produce a steady stream of gifted young players whom represent their country with distinction. South Korea has an excellent record in the World Youth Cup; a semi final appearance in 1983 being its best effort to date.

Several members of the 1983 junior selection have graduated into the current senior side. A number of them also gained experience in the Olympic games a couple of years ago.

The last Olympiad combination (the first South Korean team to participate in the tournament which included professionals) held eventual winners Soviet Union to a 0-0 draw in their opening game, Then, they squandered numerous chances against USA in another match which failed to produce a goal before an unlucky 2-1 loss at the hands of Argentina ended interest.

Credit

BY PAUL MOON

During the 1986 World Cup, South Korea – making a first finals appearance for 32 years – displayed notable improvement as its campaign progressed. Once the Koreans realised that nothing was to be gained by concentrating upon crippling Maradona, they played some neat football during a 3-1 loss to Argentina. A well earned 1-1 draw with Bulgaria followed and the Koreans' involvement ended in an enthralling 3-2 defeat at the hands of holders Italy.

As well as South Korea's long-overdue return to the world stage, the Mundial marked the return to international football of Cha after an absence of ten years. Cha had not been considered for national team duty since he moved to West Germany and embarked upon a professional career in which he gained two UEFA Cup-Winners' medals. His appearances in Mexico brought a welcome end to the policy of excluding foreign based pros.

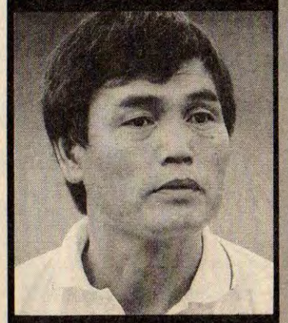
The Korea Football Association is now giving the national team every chance of success and, with future Olympics to be contested solely by under 21 selections, the KFA have acknowledged the World Cup side as Korean soccer's standard bearer.

Italy, then, will welcome the most internationally experienced, best prepared team to ever leave South Korea. It is also to host one of the most enthusiastic and ebullient sets of supporters.

Dressed all in white, South Korea's followers chant, clap, sing and wave pom poms in perfect, orchestrated unison; invariably providing immense encouragement to their beloved "Hwarang" (a nickname derived from the young warriors who inhabited Korea between the sixth and ten centuries – it is now synonymous with the country's fighting spirit).

Those fans are convinced that 1990 will be the year for a major breakthrough and their side will emulate arch rival North Korea, who shook soccer by humiliating Italy 24 years ago.

THE MANAGER



LEE Ho-taik. Aged 44. A prominent South Korean international of the mid 1960s, he has guided several professional clubs and university sides with varying degrees of success before being surprisingly elevated to coach of the national side in December 1988.

THE SQUAD

KIM Poong-joo. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born October 1, 1964) with 27 caps. Daewood Royals. Firmly established as first choice keeper, he is tall by Korean standards (6ft 2ins) and agile but his handling is suspect and he lacks confidence when faced with crosses.

JEONG Gi-dong. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born May 13, 1961) with 8 caps. Pohang. A tidy, rather than spectacular, goalkeeper he has played efficiently on the few occasions called upon for national team duty.

YOO Dai-soon. Goalkeeper. Aged 25 (born March 4, 1965) with four caps. Yukong.Drafted into the squad last year, at the expense of 1986 World Cup keeper Cho Byung Duk, he is the tenth keeper called upon since the last World Cup. On the reserves' bench for the first qualifying tournament game in Singapore, but now third choice.

CHOI Kang-Hee. Defender. Aged 30 (born April 12, 1959) with 64 caps. Hyundai. The squad's oldest player but remains in peak form – being an outstanding performer throughout the World Cup qualifying campaign and the 1989 South Korean National Championship's Player of the Tournament. Now a solid defender, but was midfielder earlier in his career.

CHUNG Jong-soo. Defender. Aged 29 (born March 27, 1961) with 57 caps. Yukong. A versatile performer, equally at home in the back four or midfield. Made his name with an outstanding Korea University team in the early 1980s before turning professional. Was relegated to reserves' bench during Singapore tournament.

CHUNG Yong-hwan. Defender. Aged 30 (born February 10, 1960) with 40 caps. Daewoo. Came to prominence as a member of Daewoo's Superleague winning side back in 1984 – when named in the competition's "All Star" selection. He has responded well to the responsibilities of captaincy unexpectedly thrust upon him late last year and is widely regarded as one fo the defenders in Asia.

GU Sang-bum. Defender aged 25 (born June 15 1964) with 29 caps. Lucky Gold Star. An integral member of the solid South Korean back four, he celebrates his 26th birthday two days after the Koreans meet Spain in Udine.

KIM Sung-ki. Defender. Aged 28 (born November 21, 1961) with II caps. Yukong. Although long regarded as one of the Superleague's most dependable defenders, international appearances have been sporadic and his only outing in Singapore was as a second half substitute v UAE. Can also play in midfield.

LEE Young-sang. Defender. Aged 23 (born February 24, 1967) with six caps. Hanyang University. Drafted into party for World Cup qualifiers last year after some exceptional performances in inter-collegiate tournaments. This tenacious defender and occasional linkman is one of the two amateurs in the squad.

PARK Kyung-hoon. Defender. Aged 29 (born January 19, 1961) with 16 caps. Pohang. A very pacy, strong tackling and consistent full back, he was one of the five South Koreans to play through all five games in Singapore. A member of the Asian All Stars selection in 1989.

YOON Deuk-yeo. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born March 25, 1961) with 12 caps. Hyundai. A workmanlike midfielder who has also been successfully employed as full back. He was effective in Singapore until sidelined by injury.

CHOI Soon-ho. Midfielder. Aged 28 (born January 10, 1962) with 61 caps. Lucky Gold Star. A highly talented, though injury prone, midfielder cum striker. Was expected to join either PSV Eindhoven or Bangu after the 1986 World Cup finals, but instead left Pohang for Lucky Gold Star when offered a contract which guaranteed him £8,000 per month – making him South Korea's best paid player. The 1985 Asian Footballer of the Year underlined his determination to play in the coming World Cup when naming his son "Roma" a couple of years ago.

HWANG Bo-kwan. Midfield. Aged 25 (born March 1, 1965) with 21 caps. Yukong. A livewire midfielder, he was the Singapore tournament's equal top scorer – with two goals! Has developed in a a free-kick specialist – his goal against Saudi Arabia coming from a 35 metre effort.

HAM Hyung-kee. Midfield. Aged 26 (born April 26, 1963) with 10 caps. Hyundai. Midfielder who has had to be content with being a fringe member of the squad. Came on as a substitute in last game in Singapore v UAE, after qualification for Italy had been secured.

KIM Sang-ho. Midfield. Aged 25 (born October 5, 1964) with five caps. Pohang. Midfielder who was given several opportunities to cement place in team last year, but failed to take them.

LEE Young-jin. Midfield. Aged 26 (born October 27, 1963) with nine caps. Lucky Gold Star. 5ft 6ins tall, terrier-like right sided midfielder. Inconsistency has prevented him from gaining permanent spot in team, but on his day he can be devastating.

YOON Sung-hyo. Midfield. Aged 27 (born May 18, 1962) with 11 caps. Pohang. Linkman who has failed to reproduce club form at international level on the few times he has been called upon.

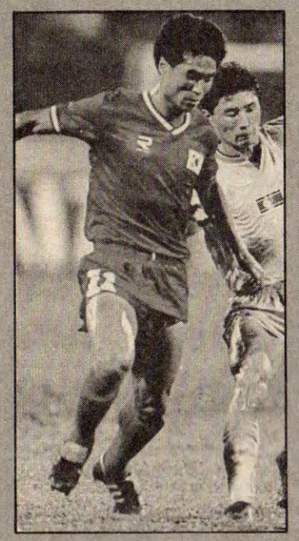
BAIK Jong-chul. Midfield. Aged 29 (born March 9, 1961) with 16 caps. Ilhwa. An irregular member of the side over the past few years. Never been able to make any great impression in midfield at international level.

BYUN Byung-joo. Winger. Aged 28 (born April 26, 1961) with 47 caps. Daewoo. One of six survivors from the 1986 World Cup finals, he is a speedy (being clocked at 11.3 seconds for 100 metres) winger whose ferocious shooting earned him the nickname Bullet. A member of the Asian All Stars team in 1989, but discarded by South Korea after opening two games in Singapore.

CHOI Sang-koo. Forward/midfield. Aged 29 (born February 15, 1961) with 20 caps. Pohang. Featured, like eight other squad members, in the 1988 Olympic tournament. But, he too has experienced difficulty in gaining regular selection for the South Korean midfield.

HWANG Seon-hong. Forward. Aged 21 (born July 14, 1968) with 19 caps. Kunkook University. A determined, elusive striker he is immensely talented at working himself into goalscoring positions but less able in converting them. Even so, he scored twice in Singapore. At 21 years of age, he is "the baby" of the squad.

KIM Joo-sung. Right wing. Aged 24 (born January 17, 1966) with 32 caps. Daewoo. The South Korean likeliest to gain most attention in Italy – both for his long, flowing hair and ability. He is a forceful, old-fashioned right winger with a great deal of pace and abundant ball skills. The 1989 Asian Footballer of the Year, he was also Player of the Tournament for both the 1989 Asian World Cup Qualifiers and 1988 Asian Cup Finals. Austria's F.C. Tirol have first option on his signature when his military service has been completed.



Byan Byung-joo (above, left) – The Bullet. Hwang Bo-kwan (right) – free-kick ace as he proved against Saudi.

WORLD SOCCER, APRIL 1990

ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

HOLLAND

MILAN CONNECTION THE KEY TO SUCCESS

HOLLANDS ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	4	2	1	1	9	4
Austria	12	3	4	5	16	14
Belgium	116	53	25	38	262	203
Brazil	4	2	0	2	4	6
Czechoslovakia	10	3	1	6	16	18
England	9	2	3	4	10	16
Germany	29	7	11	11	50	62
Italy	11	2	5	4	12	15
Rep. Ireland	12	7	1	4	25	21
Rumania	5	3	2	0	10	0
Scotland	9	2	2	5	10	13
Soviet Union	5	3	1	1	7	2
Spain	7	2	1	4	8	14
Sweden	18	8	3	7	33	40
Uruguay	4	1	0	3	3	6
Yugoslavia	5	1	1	3	5	10

HOLLAND face Italy in Rotterdam with two major question marks hanging over their World Cup campaign. The first concerns the fitness of Ruud Gullit, the second concerns the survival of manager Thys Libregts.

Gullit has not played a full match since last year's European Champions' Cup final, in which Milan wiped the floor with Steaua Bucharest by 4-0 in Barcelona. Gullit limped off after an hour. His mere presence – never mind two goals – had helped inspire Milan's success. It had also aggravated the state of the knee he had injured in the semi-final against Real Madrid.

Two more operations have been carried out since then. Even now, while Gullit is very carefully starting the most gentle of exercises, not even his surgeon, Marc Martens, can be sure whether he will be fit or not for the World Cup. Milan have given up hope that he will be fit to return to Italian league action this term. But the Italian season ends nearly six weeks before the World Cup begins...

As for Libregts, appointed to succeed Rinus Michels after the European championship triumph in Munich in 1988, life is equally uncertain. He was not a popular choice among the senior players – some of whom had mixed feelings about Michels but all of whom respected his command of the game.

Libregts's contract expires peculiarly on July 1, one week before the World Cup Final. The fact that the KNVB had not moved to rectify that anomaly as soon as Holland qualified for the finals speaks volumes for the coolness of relations with Libregts.

This would not be the first time the Dutch had changed managerial horses in World Cup midstream. In 1974 it was Frantisek Fadrhonc who guided them to the finals – where Michels took over. Again, in 1978, it was Jan Zwartkruis who led Holland to the finals and then Ernst Happel who took over. Is the same sort of development likely this time? Could it even have occured by the time these words are on the news stands?

Very possible. Ajax boss Leo Beenhakker is the likely replacement.

Injuries

Meanwhile, it says a lot for the Dutch that they can confront such potentially explosive issues and remain among the favourites in Italy this summer. Even the 1-0 defeat by Brazil in the KNVB centenary game in December can be discounted – Holland fielded virtually a reserve team because of injuries and club commitments.

Absent, for example, were Milan's two other star Dutchmen – Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

They had been helping Milan win the World Club Cup against Nacional of Colombia the previous weekend in Tokyo. At one stage it was thought they would be back in time to turn out against the Brazilians. Instead Mikan kept them in Italy. If the result conceded in their absence lulls a few opponents (such as England?) into a false sense of security, then that defeat may be considered eventually as a moral victory.

Milan are the club who hold the key, whether Gullit is fit or not. Van Basten and Rijkaard have been in superb form this past season – Van Basten collecting the European Footballer of the Year accolade for the second successive time.

Other exiles fit for the fray include Barcelona centre-back Ronald Koeman. He may be glad to return to the comparative sanity of the Dutch national team after his topsy-tursy season in Spain which turned sour recently when, first, he missed his first penalty of the season and then when he was sent off in Barsa's 3-2 defeat by Real Madrid.

Koeman played only the first half against Brazil. His substitution was a gesture of thanks towards Barcelona, who originally had not intended to release him for the match at all. But there is a questionmark hanging over elder brother Erwin Koeman, who damaged ligaments in a Belgian league match while playing for Mechelen.

Marco Van Basten will be arguably the greatest striker on display in the finals.

THE MANAGER

Thijs LIBREGTS. Aged 49 (born January 4, 1941) in Rotterdam. Played as a right half for Excelsior, Feyenoord and Excelsior again, never quite making it to the national team. Retired at 30 to become a coach. First had two years with Hillegersberg, an Excelsior affiliate, then two years as Excelsior youth coach, two years as first team assistant then five years as first team boss.

In 1980 Libregts was appointed by PSV, where he had his famous altercation with Ruud Gullit in which Libregts is alleged to have attributed Gullit's "relaxed" style to his racial background. Gullit was incensed; Libregts later claimed that he had been misinterpreted. In 1983 Libregts moved back to one of his old clubs, Feyenoord, but was dismissed in November, 1984. He found a new job almost immediately with Aris of Greece but was sacked after only two months!

In 1986 Libregts, staying in Greece, took over PAOK Salonika and was approached, as early as May, 1987, to take over as Dutch national manager.

At the time Rinus Michels was threatening to quit the KNVB. In the event he was persuaded to stay on until the end of the European championship campaign, when Libregts would take over.

Libregts worked on in Greece – first with PAOK, then with Olympiakos Piraeus. Their controversial president, George Koskotas, appointed Libregts in December 1987, only to sack him the following February.

Libregts used the 1988 European finals to spy on Holland's prospective rivals. Immediately afterwards he was formally appointed as successor to Michels. Now Libregts is on the point of being replaced by Ajax coach Leo Beenhakker – having failed to overcome his poor relations with Holland's star players.

THE SQUAD

Johannes 'Hans' VAN BREUKELEN. Goalkeeper. Aged 33 (born October 4, 1956) with 49 caps. PSV Eindhoven. Made his name originally with FC Utrecht and when they fell heavily into debt he was sold to Nottingham Forest in 1982. Spent two years working for Brian Clough at the City Ground before returning to join PSV. One of the pillars of the PSV team which, in 1988-89, set a Dutch record of 17 consecutive victories from the start of the season. In danger of losing his national team place in the 1986-87 season but returned after injury to Hiele, gained in confidence from PSV's domestic and international treble in 1988 and went on to save Igor Belanov's penalty in the European championship final against the Soviet Union in Munich. A few weeks earlier Van Breukelen was PSV's Champions' Cup Final match-winner with yet another penalty shoot-out save, this time from Veloso of Benfica. Van Breukelen plans a career as a sports journalist after retiring from playing.

Jacob 'Joop' HIELE. Goalkeeper. Aged 31 (born December 25, 1958) with six caps. Feyenoord. Holland's No 2 goalkeeper. Joined Feyenoord as a 12-year-old and they remain his only professional club. Has played only six times for Holland because of the dominant form of Van Breukelen. Hiele made his Holland debut against the Irish Republic in Dublin, in a 2-1 defeat in the qualifiers for the 1982 World Cup. It was then six years before he earned a recall in a 1-0 win over East Germany in Leipzig. Injury then cost him his place again.

Stanley MENZO. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born October 15, 1963) with no caps. Ajax Amsterdam. Signed from Haarlem in 1983. Dutch-born though his family background is from Surinam. Better described as a "goalsweeper" than a "goalkeeper" because of the way he is prepared to defend outside his own penalty area. A sort of black cross between Grobbelaar and Beasant and on the brink of the national squad for several years. Key member of the Ajax team which reached the Cup-winners' Cup final in 1987 and 1988. However his form suffered in 1987-88 when he was more exposed following the managerial upheaval after the departure of Johan Cruyff which led to club tactical and selection changes. For the 1988 European championship he was the stay-at-home, standby keeper.

Hubertus 'Berry' VAN AERLE. Rightback/Midfield. Aged 27 (born December 8, 1962) with 20 caps. PSV Eindhoven. Van Aerle had never established himself at PSV when he was lent, along with Frans Van Rooy, to Belgian club Antwerp. That was midway through the 1986-87 season. These two, under the managership of Georg Kessler, revived the Belgian club who swept out of the relegation zone into the top half of the table. A reluctant Van Aerle was then brought back by PSV because of injury problems. Kessler had converted him from rightback to midfield and he proved so outstanding for PSV that he was brought into the Dutch team for a vital European championship qualifier in Poland in 1987 after Wouters went down a knee injury. Van Aerle laid on both goals and never looked back. He says: "In football there are workers and there are thinkers. I'm a worker." He returned to duty for the Brazil game after serious injury had caused him to miss most of the first half of the season.

Ruud Gullit – will he be fit for Italy?

Frank Rijkaard – quality defender.

Adrianus 'Adri' VAN TIGGELEN. Midfield, leftback or sweeper. Aged 32 (born June 16, 1957) with 38 caps. Anderlecht (Bel). Began with Sparta Rotterdam, made his name with unfashionable Groningen then turned down offers from Ajax and PSV to move to Belgium two years ago. Quickly became a pillar of the Anderlecht defence, usually playing leftback – where he won a European championship medal. Made his Holland debut in a 1-1 draw against Belgium in Brussels five years ago.

Edward STURING. Right back. Aged 26 (born June 13, 1963) with two caps. Vitesse Arnhem. Made his debut in the 1-0 defeat by Brazil in Rotterdam in December. Began with De Graafschap of Doetinchem.

Wim HOFKENS. Midfield. Aged 32 (born March 27, 1958) with five caps. Began in Holland with Willem II but made his reputation as a skilful, versatile defender with Anderlecht. Helped Mechelen win the Cup-winners' Cup at the expense of holders Ajax in 1988.

Frank RIJKAARD. Sweeper/midfield. Aged 27 (born September 30, 1962) with 40 caps. Milan. His father is Dutch, his mother from Surinam. Turned professional with Ajax at 17 in 1980 and made his international debut against Switzerland in the autumn of 1981 despite Ajax protests to the KNVB that he was "too young". PSV wanted him to replace Milan-bound Ruud Gullit in 1987. Then coach Johan Cruyff somehow kept him at Ajax and appointed him captain. But the two fell out in the summer of 1987 and Rijkaard spent most of the 1987-88 season kicking his heels on the sidelines after a transfer to Sporting Lisbon missed the Portuguese deadline and he ended up playing three months in Spain with Zaragoza. After the European championship triumph Milan – who had wanted him 12 months earlier – stepped in to buy his contract from Sporting. His versatility contributed ironically to his slow adaptation to Italian football. But he came through in style, collecting winner's medals in European and World Club Cups.

Sweeper Ronald Koeman possesses a lethal shot.

HOLLAND

CONTINUED

Ronald KOEMAN. Central defender. Aged 27 (born March 21, 1963) with 40 caps (seven goals). Barcelona – who signed him last summer from PSV Eindhoven for £3.5million. Twice voted Players' Players of the Year in Holland. Earned his reputation in the 1987-88 season – winning the treble of European Cup and Dutch league and cup with PSV, then the European championship with Holland. PSV had, only that spring, renegotiated his contract, tieing him to Eindhoven until 1992, as a response to transfer inquiries from Barcelona and Juventus. But when Koeman made it clear he was determined to try his luck in Spain PSV agreed to sell. Koeman made his debut for the national team seven years ago in a 3-0 defeat by Sweden in Utrecht. Elder brother Erwin is also an international. Ronald was in trouble with UEFA after the 1988 Champions' Cup quarter-finals when he told a Dutch magazine a bad tackle by Gillhaus which crippled Bordeaux's Jean Tigana had been "worth its weight in gold." Koeman was suspended for one game and fined by PSV and banned for three games (later commuted to one). Thus he was cleared to face Benfica in the final and collect a winner's medal. Benfica showed how he could be controlled by instructing forward Rui Aguas to sit in front of him and prevent his attacking runs. The Irish Republic tried the same tactics in the European finals. Only once Koeman made space but when he did it proved fatal as his drive was deflected home for the winning goal by Kieft.

Danny BLIND. Defender/midfield. Aged 28 (born August 1, 1961) with three caps. Ajax. Cast off as a teenager by Sparta Rotterdam without having played a league game for them. Made his Holland debut in the 3-1 defeat by West Germany in Dortmund in May 1987.

Graeme RUTJES. Defender. Aged 29 (born March 26, 1960) with five caps. Mechelen (Bel). Widely-travelled utility defender. Began with minor club Nieuwkerk, tried his luck in the United States with Portland then returned home to Holland with Excelsior Rotterdam before becoming a member of Mechelen's 1988 Cup-winners' Cup-winning squad. This match is a taste of things to come: Mechelen face Milan next month in the Champions' Cup quarter-finals.

Jan WOUTERS. Midfield. Aged 29 (born July 17, 1960) with 27 caps. Ajax. Surprise signing three years ago from FC Utrecht. Now has nearly 300 league appearances to his name. The Ajax coaching staff value him for the 'balance' he provides in midfield. Bow-legged but highly versatile player who can appear at fullback, in midfield or out on the wing. Made his international debut eight years ago in the game against France which ended Holland's 12-year unbeaten continental home record. Recovered from knee trouble in the autumn of 1987 to play a key foraging role in Holland's European championship-winning team.

Erwin KOEMAN. Midfield. Aged 28 (born September 20, 1961) with 21 caps. KV Mechelen (Bel). Elder brother of the better-known Ronald. Began with Groningen and, after a brief spell with PSV, returned there in 1982. Joined Mechelen in 1985 and was a key man in their 1988 Cup-winners' Cup final triumph over Ajax on what was their first foray into Europe. Koeman was brought into Holland's European finals squad for the second match against England, making a vital contribution to victory not only with his midfield play but with his inch-accurate, right-wing corners. Back in the squad after missing most of the first half of the season with injury.

Gerald VANENBURG. Midfield. Aged 26 (born March 5, 1964) with 35 caps. PSV Eindhoven. Began with Ajax, where he was rated one of the most exciting young players ever seen in Holland. He was nicknamed Geraldinha or the Little Brazilian because of his technical skills. But he did not make the expected progress and Ajax released him five years ago. Several French clubs were interested – among them Nantes, Marseille, Paris Saint-Germain and Racing – but none of them thought him worth the £300,000 fee quoted by Ajax. PSV, however, took that gamble and have been amply rewarded. At Eindhoven he rediscovered his old confidence, to such effect that he signed a new four-year contract even before being one of their better players in the Champions' Cup Final victory over Benfica. Under the terms of the contract he had to give PSV notice before the start of July, 1989, if he wanted to go abroad. However, Vanenburg unfortunately forgot that clause when Italian club Roma tried to sign him last year. PSV insisted he honour the contract when he missed the deadline for telling them his transfer intentions. When Vanenburg decided he might stay, PSV renegotiated his contract to extend it for ten years and build in a pension. He also collected a £3,500 UEFA fine for having signed with two clubs simultaneously.

Jules ELLERMAN. Winger/midfield. Aged 24 (born October 7, 1965) with four caps. One of the unsung members of the PSV team which won Holand's league and cup double last season. Ellerman, also an under-21 international, joined PSV two years ago from Sparta Rotterdam in the wake of PSV's Champions' Cup triumph over Benfica.

Richard WITSCHGE. Midfield/winger. Aged 20 (born September 20, 1969) with one cap. Ajax. An under-21 international who was recently voted Young Player of the Year by his fellow Dutch professionals. Elder brother Rob, an international, plays in France for Saint-Etienne. Richard made his Holland debut in the goalless draw with Italy in February.

Aron WINTER. Midfield. Aged 23 (born March 1, 1967) with 12 caps. Ajax – though at one stage Milan did hold an option for first refusal on any transfer in case their purchase of Rijkaard fell through. Born in Surinam and came to Holland as a child. Turned pro with Ajax in 1985 and made his league debut as substitute just over one year later in a 2-1 defeat by Roda. Forced his way into the team as a regular in the 1986-87 season after scoring an eighth-minute goal in a victory over PSV. Made his international debut as a substitute in a 1-1 European championship draw against Greece in March, 1987.

Jacobus 'John' BOSMAN. Striker. Aged 25 (born February 1, 1965) with 21 caps (with 13 goals). Mechelen – having joined them from Ajax after the European finals – and, more intriguingly, after Mechelen had beaten Ajax (and Bosman) in the Cup-winners' Cup final. Turned pro with Ajax six years ago and proved a highly dangerous attacking foil for Van Basten in 1986-87, top-scoring with eight goals in the Cup-winners' Cup. Missed the final however because of a two-match UEFA suspension imposed after his expulsion for fighting with Zaragoza's Francisco Guerri in the first leg of the semi-final. Earlier in the game he had headed two decisive goals. Made up by scoring twice in the 1987 Dutch cup final win over Den Haag. Yet, during Johan Cruyff's spell in charge at Ajax Bosman was also used occasionally as sweeper! In the controversial 8-0 win over Cyprus in the autumn of 1987 – the match in which the Cypriot goalkeeper was felled by a smoke bomb – Bosman hit five goals to equal a 50-year-old Dutch international scoring record.But the tie had to be replayed behind closed doors. This time he scored a hat-trick! Bosman headed a superb goal in the 2-2 Wembley draw in 1988. But he was ousted from Holland's European championship team after a poor opening game against the Soviet Union. His desire to leave Ajax caused legal trouble: Bosman had to settle a damages claim out of court with Toulon after his agent had prematurely 'agreed' a transfer to France.

Willem 'Wim' KIEFT. Striker. Aged 27 (born November 12, 1962) with 22 caps (with nine goals). PSV Eindhoven. PSV brought him home in 1987 from Italy, where he had played with limited success for Pisa and Torino. Kieft had begun with Ajax and won the Golden Boot as Europe's top league scorer in 1982 with 32 goals. Then he was still only 19. Made his Holland debut in the same match as Gullit and Rijkaard, a 2-1 defeat by Switzerland in Zurich in September, 1981. In 1987-88 Kieft, after a slow start, ended as the Dutch league's top scorer with 29 of PSV's record 117 goals. He scored seven goals in the last two league games – four against Sparta Rotterdam then three against DS Dordrecht. He was then relegated at PSV by the arrival of Brazil's Romario. Kieft demanded a transfer recently. PSV rejected that, but he is set to leave PSV at the season's end.

Rudi Oil 'Ruud' GULLIT. Midfield/attack. Aged 28 (born September 1, 1962) with 41 caps for Holland. The 1987 European Footballer of the Year (courtesy of France Football) and World Player of the Year (courtesy World Soccer). One of the most distinguished and distinctive players in the game – with his dreadlocks and his all-round skills. Father is from Surinam, mother from Holland and Gullit was born in Amsterdam. Played as a teenager for Meerboys and DWS before making a league breakthrough under Barry Hughes at Haarlem. Moved on to Feyenoord and PSV Eindhoven before joining Milan for a world record £6million last summer. Duly inspired their thrilling championship and Champions' Cup-winning campaigns. Made his Holland debut in a 2-1 defeat by Switzerland in Zurich in September, 1981. Was a controversial figure in Holland's European championship success – sacrificing his individualistic style to the needs of the tactics laid down by manager Rinus Michels. Gullit contributed Holland's first goal in the 2-0 defeat of the Soviet Union in the Final and, as captain, carried off the cup. But he paid a heavy price, and so did Milan. Reaction from the leg injury he carried through the European finals dogged him in the early part of last season. He then injured his right knee in an accident in the European semi-final against Real Madrid. Keyhole surgery brought him back in time for the final against Steaua in which he scored twice and was inspirational. But he has not played at all this season, has undergone two further operations and his future is uncertain.

Marco VAN BASTEN. Centre forward. Aged 25 (born October 31, 1964) with 33 caps (13 goals). Milan (It). Born in Utrecht and joined Ajax from amateur side Elinkwijk in 1981, quickly making his Ajax first-team debut at the age of 17 as a substitute for Cruyff. First came to international attention in the 1983 World Youth Cup finals in Mexico. Scored 128 league goals for Ajax at a rate of almost one a game before being sold for £1.5million last summer to Milan. Van Basten's potential was so obvious in his teens that Ajax were able to sell 1982 Golden Boot-winner Wim Kieft a year after he crowned Europe's top marksman. Van Basten's most remarkable spell was at the start of the 1983-4 season when he scored 12 goals in the first seven league games, including a hat-trick in an 8-2 win over Feyenoord. He went on to total 28 goals that season and finished as Golden Boot runners-up to Ian Rush. In 1984-5 he scored 22 league goals and hit five in a single European Cup-tie against Red Boys of Luxembourg. In 1985-86 he won the coveted Golden Boot himself thanks to 37 goals in 26 league games. Last season he collected another 31 and not only captained Ajax to victory in the Cup-winners' Cup but scored their winner in the final against Lokomotiv Leipzig. Milan bought him, despite competition from Barcelona, Roma and Werder Bremen, to replace Mark Hateley. He missed most of the season because of injury but returned for the run-in to score several vital goals as substitute. To top that, Van Basten then ended the European championship finals with the top-scorer's award (his five goals included a hat-trick against England and a most memorable winner in the Final against the Soviet Union) as well as the top player's crown. He was duly voted European Footballer of the Year in both 1988 and 1989 and is currently the 15-goal top scorer in the Italian league.

Johannes 'John' VAN'T SCHIP. Forward. Aged 26 (born in Canada on Nov 30, 1963) with 21 caps. Ajax. Became club captain after the departures of Van Basten then Rijkaard. Virtually ever-present in the national team after making his debut in a goalless draw with Scotland in Eindhoven in April, 1986. But he was then dropped after one match in the 1988 European championship finals. Controversial player, good crosser of the ball, highly-rated by his fellow professionals and by Johan Cruyff but not spectacular enough for many fans.

Dangerman John Bosman.

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ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

Republic of IRELAND

BIG JACK TAKES THE LEAD ROLE

Republic of Ireland's all-time record

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	2	0	0	2	0	2
Austria	10	2	2	6	13	27
Belgium	12	4	4	4	22	22
Brazil	3	1	0	2	2	9
Czechoslovakia	12	4	1	7	14	29
England	10	2	3	5	9	16
Holland	10	4	1	5	19	20
Italy	5	0	0	5	3	12
Rumania	1	1	0	0	2	0
Scotland	6	2	2	2	4	8
Soviet Union	7	2	1	4	7	8
Spain	21	4	5	12	16	44
Sweden	6	1	1	4	7	14
Uruguay	2	0	1	1	1	3
USA	1	1	0	0	3	2
West Germany	14	5	2	7	19	26
Yugoslavia	2	1	0	1	3	4

THE MANAGER

Jack Charlton. Age 54 (born May 8, 1935). A shock choice when appointed manager of the Republic in February 1986. He is the first foreigner to manage the Republic, but now generally regarded as an Honorary Irishman! Big Jack has worked wonders with the Irish, getting them to the 1988 European Championship Finals for the first time in their history, and now another first – the World Cup Finals. Made a record 629 League appearances for Leeds United, his only club as a player. Won 35 England caps, a World Cup medal in 1966 and was named Footballer of the Year in 1967. Admits that he was "not a great player, but I could stop others from playing."

Voted Manager of the Year in England in 1974 after bringing Middlesbrough back to the first division. Later managed Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle United, but found the hassle involved in the day-to-day running of a club too much bother and walked out. His well publicised hobbies are shooting and fishing.

John Aldridge is looking to improve on his poor goal record for Eire in the finals.

THE Republic of Ireland have finally qualified for the World Cup Finals after 56 years of trying and at the 13th attempt. They didn't compete in 1930, but since February 25, 1934 when Paddy More scored all four goals against Belgium the Republic have been trying desperately to reach the Finals.

There have been lots of hard luck stories along the way, but over the past two decades the Republic appeared to have the players capable of qualifying. All they needed was leadership. They eventually got it in the shape of a straight-talking Geordie named Jack Charlton.

Up to 1969 the Republic team was picked by a five-man committee and played their home games on Sunday afternoons. Most of the squad would have travelled overnight by boat from England, having played for their clubs on Saturday. Hardly the ideal preparation for an international. Mick Meagan was the first manager to be appointed in 1969 after a player deputation to the FAI. He was followed by Liam Tuohy in 1971, who had reasonable success with limited resources.

In September 1973 Johnny Giles was the obvious choice for the job of player manager. At the time Giles was coming to the end of his playing career with Leeds United. Giles ensured that the FAI fixed their home games for Wednesdays, so that they coincided with England's fixtures. That way he would have all his players available. Overall Giles brought a touch of professionalism to the Irish scene.

Giles's formula was a tight possession-type game which was boring to the Irish fans, but reasonably successful at home. However, the Irish couldn't win an argument away from home. Giles quit in March 1980 and left for Vancouver Whitecaps. He was replaced by Eoin Hand, who had just led Limerick to the League of Ireland title.

Hand was slightly more adventurous than Giles. The Republic continued to be unbeatable in Dublin, but the bad away run continued. Hand was thorough in his preparation, but probably too friendly with some of the senior players. His last game was against Denmark in November 1985 when only 15,000 turned up at Lansdowne Road for a World Cup game.

Jack Charlton was a shock choice to replace Hand. At the FAI executive meeting on February 7, 1986 he got only three of the possible 18 votes in the first count. But that didn't bother Charlton and within three months he had won for the FAI their first-ever senior trophy by winning two games AWAY from home. It may have only been the triangular tournament in Reykjavik involving Iceland and Czechoslovakia, but as Charlton said: "The others wanted to win it also."

Uncapped

Charlton called up 26 players for his first game against Wales in March 1986, but only two were uncapped, John Aldridge and Ray Houghton. Charlton had gone to Oxford to check on Aldridge and found that the Glasgow-born midfielder also had Irish connections. The Republic with their history of emigration have made good use of the FIFA rule which allows players to declare for the land of their ancestors. The trend was started in the 1960s by Manchester United's full-back Shay Brennan and Bernie Slaven was the 39th British-born player to declare for the Emerald Isle.

Charlton has no qualms about using this rule, admitting that the Republic don't have a wealth of talent to draw on. But he has only called up British-born players whom he regards as having a long-term future for the Republic.

Shortly after Charlton was appointed the FAI set up a new commercial division with Donie Butler as commercial manager. Dr Tony O'Neill was appointed Press Officer and later succeeded Peadar O'Driscoll

BY SEAN CREEDON

as general secretary. Sponsorship deals with Opel and Adidas followed and Charlton got the technical support which previous managers lacked.

Prior to his appointment the Republic had what was generally regarded as a good team 'on paper'. His task was to convert that talent on the playing field. His motto was 'Do it my way, or you are out.' Many observers felt that gifted midfielder Liam Brady would have great difficulty coping with Charlton's 'up and at them' style. But Liam proved to be a vital cog and only for injury and suspension would have played at Euro '88. In the end it was Brady's own lack of pace which caused Charlton to drop him. The only black mark for Charlton was the insensitive substitution of Brady when he was lining up to take a free kick after only 35 minutes in the friendly against West Germany last September.

Charlton brought in Pat Bonner for the ageing Seamus McDonagh. He moved Paul McGrath to midfield and gave Ronnie Whelan a major role also. Under Eoin Hand Whelan was struggling to get in the team and was played out of position, on the left side of midfield. Ray Houghton proved to be a huge asset with his endless running and John Aldridge, despite being unlucky in front of goal continues to graft; indeed Aldo has been described as Ireland's first defender.

Best around

The long-running saga with David O'Leary, who refused to change his holiday plans when Charlton wanted him to go to Iceland is well documented. However, Charlton always maintains that in Moran and McCarthy he has two of the best central defenders around. He lost Mark Lawrenson and Jim Beglin through injury, replaced Dave Langan with Chris Morris and recalled Tony Cascarino in time for the Euro '88 Finals.

Andy Townsend has proved to an an able replacement for Brady in midfield.

Gary MacKay's unforgettable goal in Sofia opened the door to Germany where the Irish players and supporters did the Country proud. But Jack's Lads didn't need any shock results on the road to Italy.

The Republic's only defeat came in Seville back in November 1988, an under-strength team losing 2-0, Charlton's heaviest defeat to-date. Back in Dublin the Boys in Green got their revenge over Spain and in the end were only one point behind the Spaniards in Group Six. In fact during 1989 the Republic were unbeaten in eight games and conceded only one goal.

The Irish have rather unkindly been decribed as 'Wimbledon in green shirts'. Charlton says – he encourages his players to play football – but in the opposition's half of the field!

Charlton may have been a compromise choice four years ago. His success story is best described in the title of an old song 'From a Jack to a King'. Right now Big Jack would be elected 'King of Ireland', if such a title existed.

THE SQUAD

Pat BONNER. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born May 24, 1960) with 35 caps. Celtic. Joined Celtic from Donegal junior club Keadue Rovers and made his debut for The Bhoys on St Patrick's Day 1979. Pat's senior debut for the Republic was against Poland on his 21st birthday. Had to play second fiddle to Seamus McDonagh when Eoin Hand was Manager. Has now kept 21 shut-outs in his 35 caps.

Gerry PEYTON. Goalkeeper. Aged 33 (born May 20, 1956) with 26 caps. Bournemouth. First capped against Spain in February 1977. Birmingham born Peyton played for non-league Atherstone before joining Burnley. Later spent 11 seasons with Fulham before moving south to Bournemouth. Dependable under-study for Bonner, who played in the away World Cup tie against Northern Ireland.

Chris MORRIS. Full-back. Aged 26 (born December 24, 1963) with 17 caps. Celtic. Was an outside right at Sheffield Wednesday when Charlton was manager at Hillsborough. An all-round sportsman Morris represented Cornish Schools at cricket and South-West Counties in rugby union. First capped against Israel in November 1987, his crossing can be suspect at times.

Chris HUGHTON. Full-back. Aged 31 (born December 11, 1958) with 45 caps. Tottenham. Made history in October 1979 when he became the first black player to play for the Republic. That was in the 3-2 win over the USA. Houghton could in fact have declared for three countries – England, Ireland and Ghana, the land of his father. A one-club man who has spent his entire career with Spurs.

Stephen STAUNTON. Full-back. Aged 21 (born January 19, 1969) with 8 caps. Liverpool. Confident left-back, who has done well since he made his debut against Tunisia in October 1988. Played Gaelic Football before concentrating on soccer back home in Dundalk. Joined Liverpool in 1986 but was loaned out to Bradford where he made his League debut in November 1987. The youngest player in the squad.

Tony Cascarino's power in the air could trouble his opponents.

Dependable – Moran.

John ANDERSON. Full-back. Aged 30 (born November 11, 1959) with 16 caps. Newcastle. An old favourite of Charlton's from his time as manager at St James Park. Anderson joined West Bromwich Albion in 1977 from Dublin schoolboy club Stella Maris and later spent two seasons at Preston before joining Newcastle on a 'free' in September 1982. First capped against Czechoslovakia in September 1979, his last game was against Tunisia in October 1988.

Mick McCARTHY. Central defender. Aged 31 (born February 7, 1959) with 38 caps. Luton Town. Teak tough defender spent seven seasons with his home-town club Barnsley before a move to first division Manchester City. Later spent two seasons with Celtic before his surprise move to France and Olympique Lyon. McCarthy was past his 25th birthday when he made his debut against Poland in May 1984. Subject to harsh criticism by some sections of the Irish media, he has made his critics eat their words. The Republic have never lost when McCarthy has been captain – so far seven times.

Kevin MORAN. Central defender. Aged 33 (born April 29, 1956) with 46 caps. Blackburn. One of the truly romantic stories of Irish sport. Moran was happily playing the amateur game of Gaelic Football for Dublin while pursuing his studies at University College

Republic of IRELAND CONTINUED

Dublin when he was offered a trial with Manchester United. Moran was spotted playing for college side Pegasus. The rest is history. Constantly in the wars at Old Trafford because of his bravery and unfortunate to be sent off in the FA Cup Final of 1985. Hastily let go by Alex Ferguson to Sporting Gijon, Moran returned to England and Blackburn when a new coach took over at the Spanish club.

David O'LEARY. Central defender. Age 31 (born May 2, 1958) with 46 caps. Arsenal. A one club man, O'Leary has played all his senior football for the Gunners when he recently broke George Armstrong's record of 622 first team appearances. Born while his parents lived in London, O'Leary grew up in Dublin where he played schoolboy football for Reds United. First capped against England in September 1976, he was in Charlton's team for his opening game against Wales in March 1986, but his refusal to change his holiday plans meant that he had to wait until November 1988 for his next cap.

Paul MCGRATH. Central defender or midfield. Age 30 (born December 4, 1959) with 33 caps. Aston Villa. Like O'Leary, McGrath was born in London, but reared in Dublin where he played schoolboy football for Pearse Rovers and Dalkey United, before joining League of Ireland club St. Patrick's Athletic as a centre-forward! It wasn't long before United pounced in the shape of ace scout Billy Behan. But the arrival of Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford meant McGrath was on his way to Villa for a bargain £450,000. First capped against Italy in February 1985 he can play full-back, central defence or midfield and has scored four valuable goals for his country.

Ronnie WHELAN. Midfield. Age 28 (born September 25, 1961) with 37 caps. Liverpool. Played his schoolboy football for Home Farm and made his League of Ireland debut for the Dublin amateurs on his 16th birthday. Joined Liverpool a year later. Whelan played schoolboy, youth and under 21 football for his country before making his senior debut against Czechoslovakia in April 1981. Struggled to get in the team when Eoin Hand was in charge, his international career has blossomed since Charlton took over. Whelan captained his country for the first time against Malta last November.

Ray HOUGHTON. Midfield. Age 28 (born January 9, 1962) with 28 caps. Liverpool. Born in Glasgow. Houghton's Irish-born father moved to London in search of work when his son was ten years old. Houghton spent three seasons with West Ham, but made only three league appearances and was released. Snapped up by Malcolm MacDonald at Fulham where he spent three seasons before moving to Oxford to come under the eye of Charlton, at the club to check on John Aldridge. Made his debut in Jack's first game in charge and has been an automatic choice since then. Has since joined Liverpool and proved what a class player he is. Houghton got his first international goal against England in Stuttgart in June 1988.

Andy TOWNSEND. Midfield. Age 26 (born June 23, 1963) with 7 caps. Norwich. A cockney lad who qualifies for the Republic through his Kerry-born grandmother – Townsend's father Don was a full-back with Charlton and Crystal Palace in the 1950's. Andy played non-League football for Welling United and Weymouth before joining Southampton. But it was at Norwich last year that he caught the Republic's attention and made his debut in the friendly against France in February 1989. A tough, aggressive player he has yet to play on a losing Irish team.

Kevin SHEEDY. Midfield. Age 30 (born October 21, 1959) with 24 caps. Everton. Welsh-born, he opted to play for the land of his father when selected for both Welsh and Irish youth teams. Sheedy made his league debut for Hereford in April 1976 and later spent three frustrating seasons with Liverpool where he made just three league appearances. Now an established star with Everton. First capped against Holland in October 1983. Sheedy's free-kick expertise is seldom seen in the green jersey.

John SHERIDAN. Midfield. Age 25 (born October 1, 1964) with 5 caps. Sheffield Wednesday. Has so far failed to reproduce his club form at international level. John won his first cap against Rumania in March 1988, but has not played since the defeat by Spain in November 1988, when he had a 'stinker'. Hailed as the 'new Johnny Giles' when he began with Leeds United. Now happily settled at Sheffield after a few frustrating months at Nottingham Forest.

John BYRNE. Midfield or striker. Age 28 (born February 1, 1961) with 15 caps. Le Havre. Made a comeback in the friendly against West Germany last September after a long lay-off through injury. Byrne has always made the squad since his debut against Italy in February 1985, but most of his caps have been won as sub. Played for York City and QPR before his move to France in 1988.

Tony GALVIN. Winger. Age 33 (born July 12, 1956) with 29 caps. Swindon. An old fashioned winger, whose legs are tiring a bit now. Galvin had some difficulty tracing his Irish roots, but eventually made his debut against Holland in September 1982. Out of favour since the 1988 European Championship Finals, his last game was against West Germany in September last year. A former student of Russian languages at Hull University, his previous clubs were Spurs and Sheffield Wednesday.

Gary WADDOCK. Midfield. Age 27 (born March 17, 1962) with 19 caps. Millwall. The red haired midfielder has made an amazing comeback from injury. Although included in Charlton's recent squads he has yet to play under Charlton. First capped against Switzerland in April 1980, Gary's last game was against the USSR in October 1985. He accepted an insurance pay-off at QPR, made a comeback in Belgium with Charleroi and is now back in the first division with Millwall.

Ray Houghton has been an automatic choice in Charlton's side since big Jack took over in 1986.

Liam O'BRIEN. Midfield. Age 25 (born September 5, 1964) with 8 caps. Newcastle. Was still a Shamrock Rovers player when he won his first cap against Uruguay in April 1986.

David KELLY. Striker. Age 24 (born November 25, 1965) with 4 caps. West Ham. Burst on the international scene with a hat-trick in his debut against Israel in November 1987. But has struggled since his move from Walsall. Did not make recent squads.

Tony CASCARINO. Striker. Age 27 (born September 1, 1962) with 18 caps. Aston Villa. Should feel at home in Italy. The Cascarinos originally came from Monte Cassino and settled in Scotland. But Tony's mother is Irish and he opted for the Republic and made his debut back in 1985 when a Gillingham player. Tony didn't figure in Charlton's first 17 games but when called up for the friendly against Poland in May 1988 he impressed and was taken to Germany. Transferred from Millwall to Villa for £1.5 million.

John ALDRIDGE. Striker. Age 31 (born September 18, 1958) with 28 caps. Real Sociedad. Let go by his home-town club for the second time in his career earlier this season. The first time as an apprentice he had to start at the bottom with Newport and work his way back to Anfield via Oxford. The second time was a big money move to Spain. Aldo made his Irish debut against Wales in March 1986, when he struck the post. His bad luck in front of goal continued until November last year when his total from 27 games read one goal. However, hit World Cup clincher against Malta.

Frank STAPLETON. Striker. Age 33 (born July 10, 1956) with 70 caps. Blackburn. Scored in his debut against Turkey in October 1976 and equalled Don Givens' long-time Irish record of 19 goals against West Germany last September. Stapleton joined Arsenal from school and spent nine seasons at Highbury. Joined Manchester United in a £1 million deal in August 1981. After United came a move to Ajax, back to Derby County on loan, a spell with Le Havre and now happily settled with Blackburn. He has captained his country 30 times.

Niall QUINN. Striker. Age 23 (born October 6, 1966) with 13 caps. Manchester City. Eleven of his 13 caps have been won as substitute. An all-round sportsman. Quinn played Gaelic Football, hurling, basketball and Aussie rules football before joining Arsenal where he failed to hold down a regular first team place. First capped against Iceland in May 1986.

Bernie SLAVEN. Striker. Age 29 (born November 13, 1960). Upcapped. Middlesbrough. The Paisley born striker was the subject of a tug-o-war between Charlton and Scottish Manager Andy Roxburgh. But Charlton wasted no time by naming Slaven in his squad for the Welsh game on March 28 – on February 31.

Will there be more trophies for champions Derry this season?

NO FOOL LIKE A WINNER!

BY SEAN CREEDON

THE destination of the Opel League of Ireland Premier Division trophy could be decided on April Fools Day.

Although the League is not due to end until April 24 the Championship could be won on Sunday, April 1st when leaders St Patrick's Athletic meet champions Derry City, currently second.

Such is the interest that the Saints may be forced to play the game at Dalymount Park instead of Harold's Cross, their temporary home, while their own ground at Inchicore is being levelled.

Pat's manager Brian Kerr has always maintained that playing at home on the notorious slope at Richmond Park was no advantage to his players. How right he was. St Patrick's have played excellent football this season and they are now favourites to win the League of Ireland title for the first time since 1956.

It has been a great season for the League of Ireland with attendances up all round. The first division had an exciting end with Sligo Rovers and Waterford United finishing level on points and facing a play-off for the championships.

For the second successive season Bray Wanderers just missed out on promotion. Kilkenny City (formerly E.M.F.A.) had a superb League campaign under former international Eamonn Gregg, but were knocked out of the FAI Cup at the first attempt by Dublin juniors club St Francis's.

University College Dublin – who hope to field an all-scholarship team next season – and Drogheda United look certain to be relegated from the Premier Division.

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ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

ENGLAND

HIT SQUAD NEEDS MORE FIRE-POWER

By regular columnist TREVOR BROOKING

ENGLAND'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	10	4	3	3	14	12
Austria	15	8	3	4	54	25
Belgium	18	13	4	1	68	24
Brazil	14	2	5	7	12	20
Colombia	2	1	1	0	5	1
Czechoslovakia	10	6	2	2	19	11
Egypt	1	1	0	0	4	0
Holland	9	4	3	2	16	10
Italy	16	6	5	5	24	20
Rep. Ireland	10	5	3	2	16	9
Rumania	3	1	2	0	5	2
Scotland	107	43	24	40	188	168
Soviet Union	10	4	3	3	16	12
Spain	16	10	2	4	35	19
Sweden	13	6	4	3	23	14
Uruguay	7	2	2	3	7	10
USA	5	4	0	1	29	5
W. Germany	18	9	3	6	37	24
Yugoslavia	13	4	5	4	21	19

NOT SURPRISINGLY England were far from happy with the World Cup draw when they once again found themselves grouped with the Republic of Ireland and Holland.

Just as in West Germany and the 1988 European Championship they must face Jack Charlton's team first on June 11th, and then five days later take on Holland.

Their final Group F match on June 21st is against the weaker Egypt, but Bobby Robson will be hoping that by then they will have made a much brighter start to the tournament than before.

Ray Houghton's early goal proved decisive two years ago, and the impressive results achieved in reaching Italy suggests The Republic will be just as difficult in this opening fixture.

England did not concede any goals in their six qualifying games, while the Irish defence was just as resilient with only two in eight matches. It will therefore be optimistic to expect too many goals in the opening encounter.

Even in Mexico in 1986 England started the tournament badly by losing 1-0 to Portugal and then drawing goalless that fiery match with Morocco, which saw Bryan Robson dislocate his shoulder and Ray Wilkins shown the red card.

There was a feeling that the training preparation for both the Mexico and West Germany tournaments had been very demanding, and the disappointment of those early matches might point to a reshaping of the build-up this time.

After a long domestic season which has the last league fixtures on May 5th, it will be important to gently ease the selected players through the five week period leading to the opening match.

It will be important not to drain them on the training pitch, and leave them jaded when the real work begins. So can England improve on that Quarter-Final place in Mexico, when Maradona's "hand of God" was to play such a decisive role?

The key to success is dependant on a doubt affecting so many of the competing countries; are England capable of scoring goals in the crunch matches?

It is a genuine worry as in the harder matches against Sweden and in Poland, the scoresheet remained blank. The first choice striking partnership remains Gary Lineker and Peter Beardsley, who blossomed together four years ago in Mexico.

The pairing has spluttered somewhat in recent months, but that problem has not been helped by the quality of service from midfield and defence. Attacking must be a team responsibility and not a case of pointing the finger at those who are expected to score the goals.

Unchallenged

So, let us look at the expected line-up for that match on June 11th. In goal Peter Shilton has shown by a series of consistent performances that life continues to begin at 40.

He remains unchallenged at present, and I expect David Seaman and Chris Woods to be the goalkeepers helping him through his punishing training routines in Italy.

The back-four of Gary Stevens, Des Walker, Terry Butcher and Stuart Pearce has remained fairly immovable throughout. The anticipation and pace of Walker has been a huge plus in the last couple of years and his partnership with the experienced Butcher is crucial.

Pearce and Stevens have often been criticised and both are certainly reluctant to venture forward into the attacking areas of the pitch. Stevens is probably more threatened with the versatile Paul Parker his main challenger.

It is in central-midfield that Bobby Robson is unsure as Neil Webb and captain Bryan Robson have each suffered a long term injury.

Hopefully Robson should be fit and refreshed for Italy, but his likely partner can be one of many. Webb's fitness must be a gamble and so at present Steve McMahon is the favourite, but his style is very similar to Robson and they would lack the passing subtlety of other countries.

Chris Waddle can trouble any defence with his dribbling skills.

So much depends on the fitness of skipper Bryan Robson.

The main alternatives appear to be the unpredictable but brilliant Paul Gascoigne from Spurs, or else Villa's David Platt, whose darting runs from midfield have brought him so many goals this season.

Struggle

This would leave the wide midfield players to be automatically Chris Waddle and John Barnes, as David Rocastle struggles to recapture his form.

Chris Waddle has emerged as one of England's most consistent performers this season, and he and Barnes will shoulder most of the responsibility for unlocking opposition defences.

I believe there should be two places in the squad for that surprise package that so often surfaces during a major tournament. Steve Bull of Wolves will hope it is him, but there are many other worthwhile claims for Tony Daley (Aston Villa), Kerry Dixon (Chelsea), and the young Southampton duo Matthew Le Tissier and Rodney Wallace.

All have the individual flair to impress in the next few weeks, but Bobby Robson may remain cautious and rely on the tried and trusted. If the players are fit and perform to their capabilities another Quarter Final place is the least of my expectations.

It is a very open competition, and by the time one gets to the last eight the destiny of the 1990 World Cup will depend on a mixture of skill, flair, nerve, determination, and possibly in the end lady luck!

Trevor Brooking writes every week for The Sunday Express.

THE MANAGER

Bobby ROBSON, took over from Ron Greenwood in 1982 following the World Cup in Spain. Some 30 years ago was an international player himself on 20 occasions, scoring four goals. Had his most successful spell as club manager with Ipswich and although unlucky in the league he won them the FA Cup in 1978, beating Arsenal 1-0 and steered them to UEFA Cup Final victory in 1981. Has qualified England for both his World Cup campaigns although not quite enjoyed the same luck in the European Championship. Showed a great deal of character when withstanding some fierce newspaper criticism after the West Germany tournament. The performance in Italy will influence his decision as to whether to continue his role as England boss.

Stuart Pearce – tough tackler with a powerful shot.

Terry Butcher is the most experienced defender in the squad.

I believe John Barnes is the most gifted player in the side.

ENGLAND

CONTINUED

THE SQUAD

Peter SHILTON. Goalkeeper. Aged 40 (born September 18th, 1949) with 113 caps. Derby County. Still a magnificent goalkeeper who amazingly made his England debut way back in 1971 against East Germany. He was then still at Leicester City, where he began his career as understudy to Gordon Banks. He then moved on to Stoke City, Nottingham Forest, Southampton and now Derby. Always been a great perfectionist and his target during the World Cup will be to pass the record caps total of Pat Jennings (119 caps).

Chris WOODS. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born November 14th, 1959) with 14 caps. Rangers. Made his debut for England in 1985 against the United States, when he was still at Norwich City. He has had problems in the last couple of years with a virus that has sidelined him for long spells. As a result of Shilton's consistency both he and David Seaman will go to Italy somewhat inexperienced at international level.

David SEAMAN. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born September 19th, 1963) with two caps. Queens Park Rangers. Six foot three inches tall he is a very impressive dealer of crosses who made his debut for his country in 1988 against Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately it was one of those games where he had few touches and so he must be blooded in at least one of the warm-up matches. He has been the centre of much transfer speculation this season and any fee is likely to be in the region of £1.5 million.

Gary STEVENS. Full back. Aged 26 (born March 3rd, 1963) with 36 caps. Rangers. Made his debut in 1985 against Italy and has been a regular since then. Did not have a good European Championship in West Germany in 1988 where he was prone to the odd defensive lapse. Moved to Rangers from Everton for a £1 million and has been one of several "English imports" into the Premier League in Scotland.

Paul PARKER. Versatile Defender. Aged 25 (born April 4th, 1964) with four caps. Queens Park Rangers. He is recognised as one of the quickest defenders in the first division, where he has played as sweeper for most of this season. He is just as effective as a stopper and often called on to mark the main dangerman in the opposition. Strangely enough, since his debut against Albania last year all his international appearances have been at right back. Main challenge to Gary Stevens.

Des WALKER. Defender. Aged 24 (born November 26th, 1965) with 13 caps. Made his debut against Denmark in 1988 and went on to become an important member of the defence that did not concede a goal in the qualifying matches. He has been a major influence in the success Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest have enjoyed in Cups during the last two seasons. His pace enables him to rescue numerous situations with last ditch tackles.

Terry BUTCHER. Defender. Aged 31 (born December 28th, 1958) with 67 caps. The third of the Rangers trio and the most experienced outfield defender in the squad. He used to be with manager Bobby Robson at Ipswich and he has a tremendous faith in the reliable centre back. Strong in the air and naturally left footed he is the perfect foil for partner Des Walker.

Mark WRIGHT. Defender. Aged 26 (born August 1st, 1963) with 22 caps. Derby County. He really lost his place following that European Championship in 1988 and the emergence of Des Walker. It now seems a straight fight between him and Tony Adams of Arsenal for inclusion in the final 22. Made his England debut back in 1984 against Wales but is sometimes suspect with his temperament.

Stuart PEARCE. Full back. Aged 27 (born April 24th, 1962) with 19 caps. Nottingham Forest. Made his debut for England against Brazil in 1987, but took over from Kenny Sansom as a regular at about the same time as his Forest team-mate Des Walker. Renowned for his robust, vigorous tackling which can often bring him under the spotlight of referees. Also possesses a really powerful shot with his favourite left foot, especially from free-kicks.

Tony DORIGO. Full back. Aged 24 (born December 31st, 1965) with one cap. Chelsea. He has been understudy to Pearce but only gained his cap this season and so does lack experience at this level. Was actually born over in Melbourne Australia where his family had emigrated but came to England to try his luck in the Football League. Joined Aston Villa at first before moving to Chelsea where his attacking instincts have made him a firm favourite with their crowd.

David ROCASTLE. Right Midfield. Aged 22 (born May 2nd, 1967) with 10 caps. Arsenal. Made his debut against Denmark in 1988 and went on that season to play a key part in Arsenal winning the First Division title. Is a hard working flank player who does his fair share of defending and has enjoyed his better England games away from home. Has struggled to recapture that form this season and needs some good displays to retain his place in the final 22.

Chris WADDLE. Right Midfield. Aged 29 (born December 14, 1960) with 48 caps. Marseille. Disappointed many Spurs fans when he left London for a staggering £4.5 million transfer to the French club. Naturally left-footed he is equally at home down the right-flank where he began his England career against Eire in 1985. He is a fine dribbler and crosser but has only managed to score six international goals so far.

Steve McMAHON. Centre Midfield. Aged 28 (born August 20th, 1961) with nine caps. Liverpool. Made his debut against Israel in 1988 but has featured more frequently this season with his injuries to Neil Webb and Bryan Robson. A hard tackling player who likes to make forward runs whenever possible, but has not found it easy to be effective in attacking situations at this level.

Bryan ROBSON. Centre Midfield. Aged 33 (born January 11th 1957) with 82 caps. Manchester United. Captain of the side his manager has always emphasised that he is the key player. He was very unlucky to miss most of the Mexico tournament in 1986 with a dislocated shoulder, and will be hoping to fully recover from a hernia operation he had in February. He is the all-action player who has been an outstanding goalscorer with his late burts in to the opposition penalty area. He gave a typical match-winning performance against Yugoslavia in December when he scored both goals in a 2-1 victory.

Steve HODGE. Centre or flank midfielder. Aged 27 (born October 25th 1962) with 18 caps. Made his debut azgainst Russia in 1986 when with Aston Villa. Most of his subsequent appearances have been wide on the left of midfield. During the last two seasons at Nottingham Forest Brian Clough has played him in a more central role with great effect. He is a tenacious, hard running player who has now begun to make the same dangerous runs as skipper Bryan Robson.

Paul GASCOIGNE. Midfield. Aged 22 (born June 27th 1967) with six caps. Spurs. He is one of the most discussed players in the country as people argue over whether or not he should be in the England team. He joined Spurs in July 1988 for £2 million from Newcastle. There is no doubt he has great flair and vision and can carve up the tightest defences. His critics claim he is too inconsistent, invites trouble with his constant chatter, and has shortcomings when it comes to defending. Should get to show which verdict is right in the weeks ahead.

John BARNES. Attacking Player. Aged 26 (born November 7 1963) with 49 caps. Liverpool. Made his debut in 1983 against Northern Ireland and has managed just nine goals. I believe he is the most gifted player in the squad but has yet to portray that talent at this level. He has a wonderful balance and touch, but often looks restricted and too conscious of his defensive responsibilities. I would love to see him given a free role that would allow him to show his undoubted talent. He is also a fine taker of free-kicks within shooting range of his left foot.

Peter BEARDSLEY. Attacking Player. Aged 29 (born January 18th 1961) with 37 caps.Liverpool. Made his debut against Egypt in 1986 which was the start of him forcing his way in to the Mexico squad. It was there that his partnership with Lineker came to fruition although he has only managed seven goals himself. He has had a mixed season with Liverpool where he has not always seen eye to eye with manager Kenny Dalglish. At his best he can dribble by defenders at will as well as working hard at closing down opposing defenders.

David PLATT. Attacking Player. Aged 23 (born June 10th 1955) with two caps. Aston Villa. He has really caught the eye this season during Villa's great challenge for the First Division title. He is equally at home as a striker or in midfield but will probably find the latter role easier in this elite company. He is a thoughtful team player with a fine goalscoring instinct that has seen him score as regular as anyone this season.

Gary LINEKER. Attacking Player. Aged 29 (born November 30th 1960) with 46 caps. Spurs. He has a superb striking rate for England with 29 goals to date since his debut against Scotland in 1984. Has always been successful with his previous clubs Leicester, Everton, Barcelona and now Tottenham. He will carry the burden of scoring for England as was the case in Mexico. A striker who runs off defenders brilliantly but then relies on good service to utilise his acceleration which has returned after illness last year.

Steve BULL. Attacking Player. Aged 24 (born March 28th 1965) with three caps. Wolves. His 25th birthday was the night of the Brazil international, where his style of play would contrast sharply with the skills of the men in yellow. Since joining Wolves from West Brom he just cannot stop scoring goals, and when they were promoted from the Third Division last season he totalled a stunning 37 in his 45 games. They have not flowed quite so freely in the Second Division and so there must be a doubt at this high level. His determination and bulldozing style unsettles defenders and he has worked hard to improve his first touch.

Tony DALEY. Attacking Player. Aged 22 (born October 18th 1967) Yet to make his full England debut. Aston Villa. I feel there should be one newcomer although Bobby Robson has remained loyal to those achieving qualification. Daley has proved a real livewire for Villa and his electrifying pace makes him an obvious matchwinner. It takes him past defenders with ease and could cause anxiety to the very best defences. He should get his chance in one of the warm up matches when we can see if he can transfer his club form to the international scene.

Gary Lineker is back to his best after a bout of Hepatitis.

Steve Bull (left) and Paul Gascoigne (right) must prove over the next few weeks that they should be in Italy.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

EGYPT

EL-GOHARY CREATES A TEAMWORK REVOLUTION

BY TIM COLLINS

It is more than 50 years since Egypt last qualified for the World Cup finals and, as a result, they might be excused if they arrive already exhausted from some premature celebrations when this year's World Cup finals begin in Italy this June.

Such a prospect is exceedingly unlikely however since the national team which will face Holland, the Republic of Ireland and England in Palermo and Cagliari has been built of stern stuff, solid teamwork and a fanaticism for the game as instilled by their national coach Mohamed El-Gohary.

"We have an important philosophy," he said. "We used to have stars but now we have team-work. And out of the team-work we find new stars."

Too modest to say so himself, El-Gohary is the man who has been announced as Egypt's latest star and the man virtually worshipped by the success-starved Egyptian football public who have dreamed of the day when another World Cup appearance would follow their only previous showing in those far-away finals in Italy in 1934.

In those finals, won by the hosts, Egypt were knocked out in the first round by Hungary who beat them 4-2. They had qualified for the finals by beating Palestine 7-1, a result that takes some imagination to put in to context these days.

This time, the Egyptians of El-Gohary have reached Rome by a much harder route through the African qualifying section. Having disposed of Liberia, Malawi and Kenya to reach the final play-off they then faced Algeria over two legs and triumphed by the only goal of 180 minutes of attrition in Constantine and Cairo.

"Now we can only expect to do our best in a very difficult group," said El-Gohary, who,like most Egyptian managers is dubbed the Captain and rarely referred to as a coach or manager.

"But I know that all our opponents are tough and experienced. Our only advantage is that we know their tactics much better than they know ours. If we can make use of that, we have a chance. The main thing is that we want the world to respect Egypt and her football again."

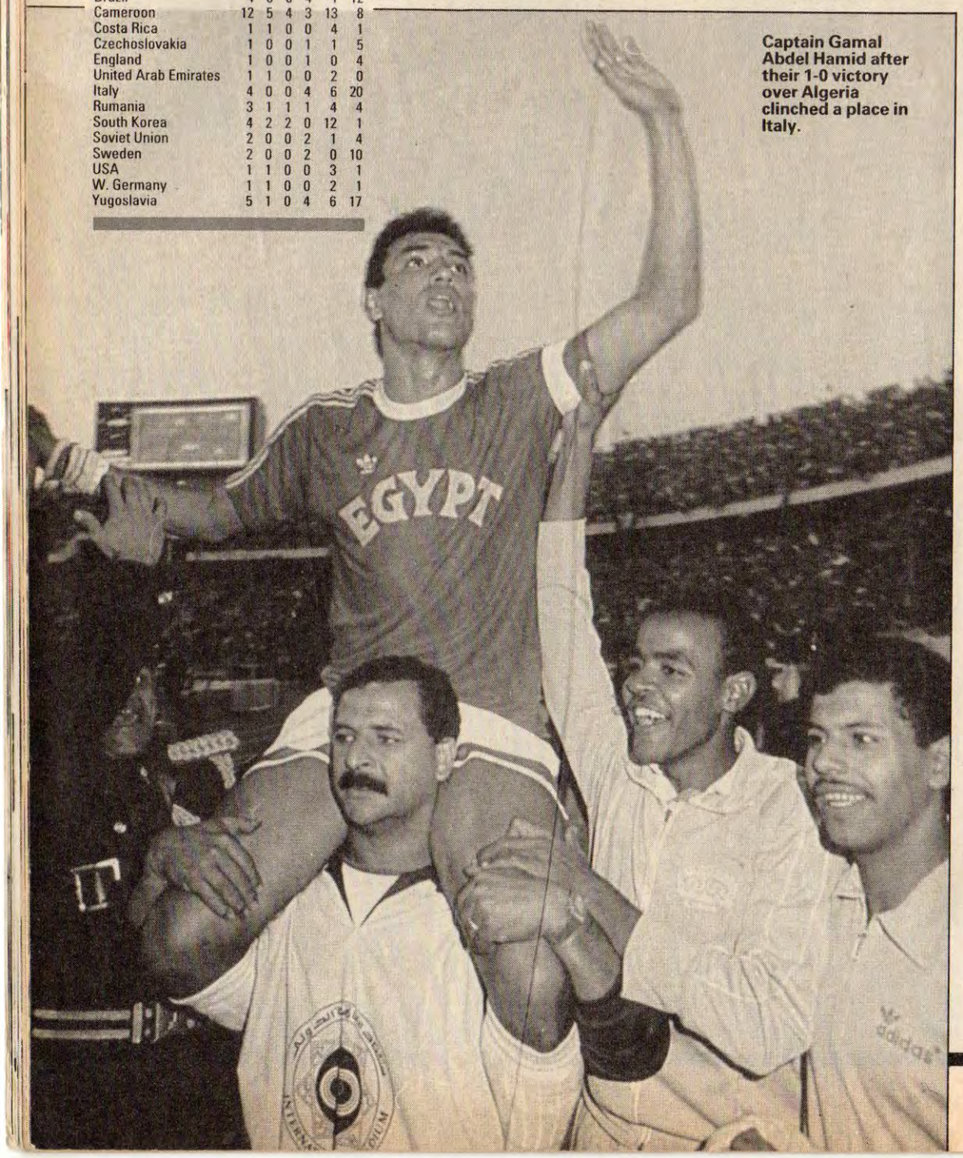
The oldest of the footballing nations in Africa, it has taken Egypt a long time to regain the summit of soccer on that continent. Thanks to Englishman Mike Smith, they were able to celebrate at the zenith in 1986 when they won the African Nations Championship, defeating Cameroon in a penalty shoot-out in the final. This secured their third African triumph, having won it previously in 1957 and 1959. They were also runners-up in 1962.

The bulk of Egypt's squad has been drawn from the country's top two clubs Al-Ahly and Zamalek and taken away already on an intensive preparation programme. A series of a dozen friendly warm-up matches against various levels of European opposition was devised by El-Gohary to ensure peak condition in Italy.

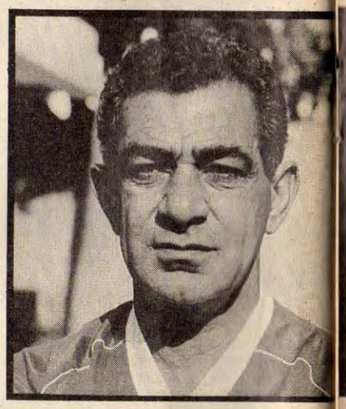
Talent is in short supply but the Egyptians can point to one goalscorer in Hassam Hassan with the ability to finish accurately and tempt a dream of a place in the second round. Unfortunately, the player most likely to have helped create his chances, Hisham Abdel-Rasoul is not going to be there – he suffered a fractured leg in a car accident last December.

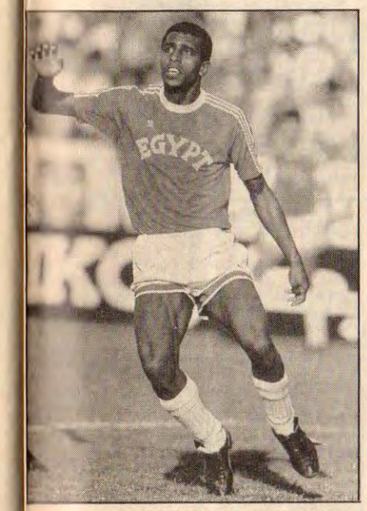
EGYPT'S ALL-TIME RECORD

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	1	0	0	1	0	6
Austria	2	1	0	1	2	3
Brazil	4	0	0	4	1	12
Cameroon	12	5	4	3	13	8
Costa Rica	1	1	0	0	4	1
Czechoslovakia	1	0	0	1	1	5
England	1	0	0	1	0	4
United Arab Emirates	1	1	0	0	2	0
Italy	4	0	0	4	6	20
Rumania	3	1	1	1	4	4
South Korea	4	2	2	0	12	1
Soviet Union	2	0	0	2	1	4
Sweden	2	0	0	2	0	10
USA	1	1	0	0	3	1
W. Germany	1	1	0	0	2	1
Yugoslavia	5	1	0	4	6	17



Captain Gamal Abdel Hamid after their 1-0 victory over Algeria clinched a place in Italy.





Defender Rabia Yassin loves to attack.

THE MANAGER

Mohammed EL GOHARY. Aged 52 (born February 20, 1938) Cairo-born El-Gohary is a former army officer who retired as a colonel in 1971. He was a left winger for the Egyptian national team during the 1960s. He followed Englishman Mike Smith, the former Wales manager, into the job with Egypt in late 1988 and has reaped the benefit of his organisational work by helping stars like goalscoring striker Hassam Hassan to shine. As a player, he shone with Al Ahly in Cairo and went on to win a host of domestic Egyptian honours as well as 21 national caps on the left side of the attack. He scored 11 international goals and believes in encouraging his own young strikers to try and follow suit. As a coach, he has worked with Al-Ahly and also in Saudi Arabia with Dettmar Cramer.

THE SQUAD

Ahmad SHOUBEIR. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born September 28, 1960) with 60 caps. Al Ahly. Regular first-choice for the national team since the retirement of Sabet El Batal, the 1986 African Nations Cup-winning hero. He rivals Cameroon's Bell as the top goalkeeper in Africa.

Ayman TABIR. Goalkeeper. Aged 24 (born Janaury 7, 1966) with five caps. El Zamalek. A talented goalkeeper whose chances of an international breakthrough have always been delayed by the dominance of El Batal and then Shoubeir.

Khaled MUSTAFA. Goalkeeper. Aged 24 (born September 7, 1965) with three caps. El Ettihad. Faces an almost thankless task in attempting to break through to the team on a regular basis but is rated a good contender by El-Gohary.

Ismail YOSSEF. Midfield. Aged 25 (born June 8, 1964) with 28 caps. Zamalek. A very promising and versatile midfield player who El Gohary believes can become one of the team's stars at the finals and also a potential Egyptian export to European soccer.

Tarek SOLIMAN. Midfield. Aged 28 (born January 24, 1962) with 44 caps. El Masry. A goalscoring player whose ability to break through from deep positions has made him a valuable part of Egypt's plans.

Taher ABU ZEID. Midfield/Forward. Aged 27 (born April 27, 1962) with 69 caps. Al-Ahly. Considered to be one of the stars of the squad. A skilful goalscoring creative player with the ability to catch the eye.

Ahmad EL KASS. Midfield. Aged 24 (born July 8, 1955) with 52 caps. Olympic (Alexandria). Considered to be the midfield heir apparent, he is tipped to be one of the revelations at the World Cup with his skilful and intelligent play.

Saber EID. Forward. Aged 21 (born March 29, 1969) with 16 caps. El Mahalla. A dangerous raiding winger who can also play in midfield where his skill and tenacity may be of most use in the finals.

Mohammed RAMADAN. Forward. Aged 26 (born September 11, 1963) with 29 caps. El-Tersana. One of El-Gohary's newcomers from whom much will be expected in the finals.

Ayman SHAWKI. Forward/Midfield. Aged 27 (born December 9, 1962) with 25 caps. El-Ahly. A combative and busy player with more skill than he is often credited with, he was first called up for Egypt in 1980 at the African Nations Cup.

Gamal ABDEL HAMID. Forward. Aged 32 (born November 24, 1957) with 73 caps. Zamalek. Team captain and inspiration, he is no longer the direct and powerful striker who earned international respect, but more of a director of play. Long recovered from the penalty miss against Morocco in the 1986 World Cup qualifiers which threatened his confidence and his career.

Hassam HASSAN. Forward. Aged 23 (born August 10, 1966) with 51 caps. Al-Ahly. A physically powerful and skilful striker, he is one of the talented newcomers so much encouraged by El-Gohary. Yet he made his international debut back in September 1985 against Norway.

Hisham ABDEL RASOUL. Forward. Aged 21 (born October 6, 1964) with 18 caps. Al-Minia. One of the great new discoveries of Egyptian football, he was top scorer in the qualifying tournament with three goals including the all-important winner against Algeria. Sadly, a bad car crash has almost certainly ruled him out of the finals.

Rabia YASSIN. Defender. Aged 27 (born September 7, 1960) with 82 caps. El-Ahly. First called into the national squad in the 1980s, he has become of one Egypt's most dependable and established men at centre-back after originally coming in a full-back. Loves to attack.

Ahmed RAMZY. Defender. Aged 24 (born October 25, 1965) with 31 caps. Zamalek. A resilient centre-back who can also play at full-back, he has forced his way in to the Zamalek team after overcoming a series of injuries which at one stage threatened to ruin his career.

Hesham YAKAN. Defender. Aged 27 (born August 10, 1962) with 33 caps.Zamalek. A good left back who has been well established at Zamalek for some time before gaining regular international recognition.

Ashraf KASSEM. Defender. Aged 23 (born July 25, 1966) with 41 caps. Zamalek. One of the stalwarts of the squad since El-Gohary took charge and a player with the ability to build attacks from the back.

Hany RAMZY. Defender. Aged 21 (born March 10, 1969) with 33 caps. Al-Ahly. An outstanding youth international centre-back who gained widespread fame with his performances during a youth tournament staged in Qatar in the mid 1980s. Now coming of age in the national team.

Yehia SIDKI. Defender. Aged 28 (born August 5, 1961) with 73 caps. Al-Ahly. One of the veterans of the squad and no longer an automatic first choice for Egypt. But his experience could be vital in Italy.

Saber EID. Defender/Midfield. Aged 27 (born May 20,1959) with 16 caps. El-Mahalla. A dangerous attacking player who can also play upfront, he has the versatility to be a vital member for El Gohary during the World Cup finals.

Alaa MAXHOUB. Midfield. Aged 27 (born January 19, 1963) with 46 caps. El-Ahly. A player of great potential who has yet to fulfil his promise. He played a big part in the 1986 African Nations Cup win, playing in the qualfying round and coming on as substitute in the final.

Magdi ABDEL GHANI. Midfield. Aged 30 (born July 27, 1959) with 81 caps. Beira Mar (Portugal). Much may depend on his ability to create and make the play for Egypt following the road accident which has probably ruled Hisham Abdel-Rasoul out of the finals.

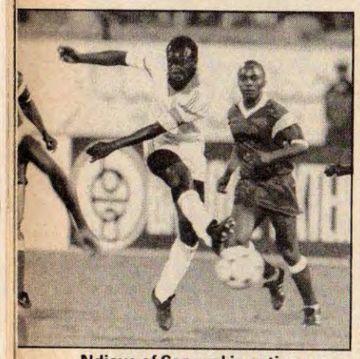
Badr RAGAB. Midfield. Aged 24 (born September 26, 1966) with 16 caps. Al-Ahly. One of the most promising newcomers, he first broke in to the squad for the friendly against Norway in September 1985 when he was still only 19.

A serious car crash has probably ruled Hisham Abdel Rasoul out of the World Cup finals.

WORLD SOCCER, APRIL 1990

ALGERIE 90

ALGERIA THE KINGS OF AFRICA



Ndiaye of Senegal in action v Kenya.

IT WON'T be a Nations Cup to stay long in the memory. In fact, the 17th version of Africa's bi-annual tournament is best quickly forgotten.

Not that it was a flop. Algeria provided the perfect setting for the tournament – as well as popular winners – but it was never going to be a great spectacle given the combination of the World Cup and the culmination of the European season.

The World Cup kick-off two months hence weighed heavily on the minds of the two African representatives, Cameroon and Egypt, both of whom did not get further than their opening groups, while European clubs denied leave to compete to several of Africa's leading players.

Nigeria, who were to end beaten finalists, were particularly hard hit, but there were key players missing all round to detract from the glamour of the occasion.

Cameroon will certainly have work to do before their meeting with Argentina in Milan on June 8. Their lacklustre defence of the Nations' Cup put a further damper on a tournament already clouded by the decision of Egypt to send the second-string to Algeria.

The hosts were certainly worthy winners and the play of their team in a class of its own.

Rabah Madjer, who won the award as the tournament's best player afterwards from teammate Cherif el-Ouazani, put on a magical show of confident and cocky skill, bringing back images of his cheeky part in FC Porto's European Cup win over Bayern Munich in 1987.

Madjer had a hand in almost all of the Algerian goals in the tournament as the North Africans extracted a measure of revenge for their 3-0 defeat in the 1980 final in Lagos.

Nigeria, who were hammered 5-1 by Algeria in the opening game, fielded virtually a youth team, with only the Ivorian-based professional Rachidi Yekini having a reasonable amount of experience.

Their plucky courage in picking themselves up after that seeming knock-out blow in the first game, to edge both Egypt and Ivory Coast for a semi-final spot, was commendable.

But Egypt cause problems all round

The semi-final win over unbeaten Zambia was one of the real shocks of the tournament, but the Super Eagles did disappoint with their mediocre display in the final.

Egypt's decision to keep their best players at home was probably more to spite the Algerians than their official reason of keeping the players injury free for the World Cup.

The two nations had a little tussle late last year to determine a place in Italy and the Egyptians initially withdrew from the Nations' Cup finals, citing fears for the safety of their players.

Not even African Confederation president Issa Hayatou, in a pre-tournament dash to Cairo, could dissuade the Egyptians and it was only after some heavy diplomatic manoeuvering that a B team was dispatched to Algiers on the eve of the kick-off.

Predictably, Egypt were never in it from the start, losing all three games, being pelted by Algerian fans and doing African soccer a major disservice with their lack of respect for the African Unity Cup.

Also missing from the competition were the likes of Kalu-sha Bwalya (Zambia), Joseph Antoine Bell (Cameroon) and Stephen Keshi (Nigeria), all of whom would have added such needed charisma to a sometimes deadly, dour affair.

Ivorian Youssouf Fofane played only one game and that was because his club Monaco did not need him for their European Cup-winners' Cup tie.

Conversely, though, Algeria and Senegal both succeeded in securing the services of their key European-based professionals and the difference was glaringly apparent.

The Algeria-Senegal semifinal was the best game of the tournament, even if more for its competitive nature than the skill on display. Claude LeRoy, the French coach who had seen Cameroon into the two previous finals, looked on the way to a personal hat-trick with the Lions of Senegal.

How close he came! Were it not for the injury to skipper Jules Bocande, they might have upset the Algerians in the semifinal.

BY MARK GLEESON

Above: Algeria's Madjer was the player of the tournament. Right: Menad of Algeria wins this midfield tussle.

Algeria's match-winning hero Oudjani.

GROUP A (Algiers)

March 2
Algeria 5 (Madjer 36, 58, Menad 69, 72, Amani 88)
Nigera 1 (Okocha 82)
HT: 1-0 **Att:** 65,000 **Ref:** Takada (Japan)
Algeria: Osman – Serrar, Megharia, Adghigh, Benhalima – El-Ouazani, Amani, Saib – Madjer, Oudjani (Rahim 79), Menad.
Nigeria: Agui – Aminu, Okechukwu, Ogunlana (Bazuaye 71), Uwe, Oyenkanmi – Oliha (Okocha 16), Karkor, Adesina – Yekini, Amokachi.

It took until the second half for the goal rout to begin, but once Algeria got going there was no stopping them. Madjer was magical, scoring twice and making the other three goals in a great start for the hosts who had 65,000 fanatical fans behind them in the July 5 stadium. French-based striker Djamel Menad notched the other two with Antwerp's defender Djamel Amani getting the fifth. Nigeria's consolation from Emmanuel Okocha did little to stop the momentum.

March 3
Ivory Coast: 3 (Traore 53, 60; Kagui 73)
Egypt 1 (Adel 75)
HT: 0-0
Ivory Coast: Gouemene – Ake, Hobou, Piero, Diads – Gadji, Lue, Magui, Amani – Traore, Yohoua.
Egypt: El Batal – Fawzi, Mohamed, Hicham, Chehata – Tasha, El Chourl, Mansour, Adel – Ibrahim Saad, Tarik.

This game was postpone 24 hours as the Egyptians arrived late for the competition. Not surprisingly they were easily beaten with Abdoulage Traore getting two and then laying on the third for Sege Masui. Traore's second was a penalty, after Magui had been tripped. A late reply from Abderrahmane Adel did little to alter the picture.

Cameroon defender Tataw a loser v Zambia.

March 5
Egypt: 0
Nigeria: 1 (Yekini 8)
HT: 0-1 **Att:** 45,000
Egypt: El Batal – Fawzi, Hicham, Mohamed, Sedki – El Sayeh (Salah 51), El Chouri, Ibrahim Saad, Mansour – Abder Rahmane, Tarik.
Nigeria: Agu – Amini, Okechukwu, Ani Jekhu, Semitoje – Iroha, Okocha (Oilha 86), Kpakor, Ogunlana (Oyekanmi 61) – Yekini, Omokachi.

A dreadful mistake by veteran goalkeeper Thabet El Batal cost the Egyptians a game they really deserved to win. He completely missed a free kick from wide on the left and Yekini towered above a cluster of defenders to nod home in the eighth minute.

Egypt were the more enterprising, but had not only the Nigerians, but also the fervent Algerian crowd, against them.

March 5
Algeria: 3 (Menad 23, El Ouazani 81, Oudjani 82)
Ivory Coast: 0
HT: 1-0 **Att:** 45,000
Algeria: Osmani – Serrar, Megharia, Adghigh (Adjag 9, Lezizi 71), Benhalima – El-Ouazani, Amani, Salb, Madjer – Oudjani, Menad.
Ivory Coast: Gouamarie – Aka, Tiero, Sekana, Hobou – Ruffin, Gadji Celi, Nagul – Ben Salah, Traore, Dali.

A tentative start, after which Algeria exploded into action with goals from Menad, El-Ouazani and Cherif Oudjani. Again it was Madjer controlling the play with deft touches and creative thinking. The Ivorians never got a chance to come near the scoresheet and their frustration showed when skipper Traore got his marching orders seven minutes from the end.

March 8
Ivory Coast: 0
Nigeria: 1 (Yekini 3)
HT: 0-1 **Ref:** A Naciri (Morocco) **Att:** 80,000
Ivory Coast: Gouamane – Aka, Tiero, Sekana, Hobou – Lignon (Kouadio 65), Gadji Celi, Magui – Ben Salah, Dali (Amani Yao 35), Fofana.
Nigeria: Agu – Aminu, Ukechukwu, Anijekwu, Semitoje – Uwe, Okocha, Krakor (Ogunlana 79), Oliha (Adeslna 46) – Yekini, Elahor.

This match was to determine who would join Algeria in the semi finals and it was settled in the Eagles favour as early as the third minute when Yekini scrambled home from close range.

Youssouf Fofane was back for this game but that had little effect on the Nigerian defence, having flown in only four hours previously after Monaco did not use him in the tie against Spain's Real Valladolid.

Amani Yao and Magui also missed chances, but Yekini could have made it 2-0 near the end.

March 8
Algeria: 2 (Amani 39, Saib 43)
Egypt: 0
HT: 2-0 **Ref:** E Cadressen (Kauritius) **Att:** 80,000
Algeria: Kadri – Ait-Abderrahamane, Lazizi, Serrar, Adjas – El-Ouazani, Meftah, Amani (Djuhnit 60), Suib – Rehim, Menad (Bouiche 79).
Egypt: El Batal – Fawzi (Hanafi 46), Ibrahim Saad (Rayan 46), Hicham, Sedki, Mohamed, Salah, El Chouri, Mansour, Abderrahamane Tarik.

The hosts rested several key players in another twist to the 'war' between the two countries, playing a virtual B team against the Egyptians' second string. And Algeria won the moral victory, with first half goals from Amani and Moussa Saib. Egypt, one had the feeling, just wanted to get on the first plane home.

GROUP B (Annaba)

March 3
Cameroon: 0
Zambia: 1 (Chikabala 58)
HT: 0-0
Cameroon: N'Kono – Tataw, Massing, Kunde, Ebwelle – Libih, Kana Biyik, Makanaku – Ebongue, Omam Biyik, Djon kep (M'Fede B1)
Zambia: Chabala – Changwe, Soko, E Mulenge, Chomba, K Mulenga – Makinka, Momba, Maiska, Mwita (Makwaza 87) – Chikabala.

Argentina's manager Carlos Bilardo was on hand to watch the Cameroonians, but saw little as they were upset 1-0 by the Zambians.

Webby Chikabala netted the only goal, putting Timothy Mwita's cross past recalled keeper Thomas N'Kono.

The Zambian defence was particularly impressive as Cameroon were fired into action by the goal, but they did let Francois Oman Biyik through, only for the Laval striker to hit the woodwork.

March 3
Kenya: 0
Senegal: 0
HT: 0-0 **Ref:** I Traore (Mali)
Kenya: Muhanji – Anyangu, P Ochieng, Oduor, Ocholas – Khamis, Onyera, Lukoge, G Onyango – Motego, Dawo.
Senegal: Seck – Fall, Tew (M Diallo 72), Diagne, A Mendy (Samb 69) – Cisse, Sagna, Ndiaye – A Diallo, Ndao, Sane.

Senegal's nervous start belied their talent as they had much of the run of play.

They broke well in the early stages when Kenya had more of the possession and Lamine Ndiaye's long range freekick hit the bar just before the interval.

German-based professional Soulegmane Sane could have sewn it up on the final whistle, but missed a glorious chance with just goalkeeper Washington Nuhanji to beat.

March 6

Kenya: 0
Zambia: 1 (Makwaza 40)
HT: 0-1
Kenya: Munhani – Anyangu, P Ochieng, Oduor, Ochola – Rhamis, Onyera (Odie 52), Lukoye (Ndolo 52), G Onyango – Motego, Dawo.
Zambia: Chabala – Soko, Chomba, E Mulenga, Changwe – Makinka, Nomba, Makwaza, Msiska (Mwanza 80) – Chikabala, G Mulenga (Malitoli 80).

The Kenneth Kaunda XI became the first team to qualify for the semifinals in a one-sided victory where missed opportunities were rife.

A combination of the woodwork and Kenyan keeper Mujanji kept the likes of Chikabala, Linos Makwaza and Lucky Msiska out until the 40th minute when Makwaza netted from 15 metres.

March 6
Cameroon: 0
Senegal: 2
HT: 0-1
Cameroon: N'Kono – Tataw, Kassing, Kunde, Ebwelle – Libih (Ebongue 46), Pagal, Kana Biyik, Makanaky – Ekeke (Djonkep 76), Omam Biyik.
Senegal: Seck – Tew, Diagne, M Diallo, Fall – Cisse, Sugan, Ndiaye, Ndao (Samb 78) – Bocande, Sane (Diarra 89).

The big grudge match with former Cameroon coach LeRoy leading the Senegalese against his old team turned into a personal triumph for the Frenchman. A superb throughball had Marseille striker Ab doulaye Diallo in for first goal right on halftime and then Moussa Ndao condemned the holders to the sidelines with a swerving freekick that had N'Kono all ends up.

March 9
Senegal: 0
Zambia: 0
HT: 0-0 **Ref:** El Dine (Egypt) **Att:** 10,000
Senegal: Seck – Diagne, Tew (M Diallo 30), R Mendy, Fall – Cisse, Sagna, Ndiage – A Diallo, Bocande, Ndao.
Zambia: Chabala – Soko, Chomba, E Nulanga, K Mulenga – Nakinka, Chisala, Momba, Makwaza – Malitoli (Msiska 59), Chikabula.

Visions of West Germany and Austria in Spain in 1982 as both sides were content to play out the draw. Senegal needed the point to secure a semifinal berth, Zambia were already through. The result was a dour match with only Ndao showing any sparkle, hitting the bar with another of his long range specials.

March 9
Cameroon: 2 (Maboang, 28, 69)
Kenya: 0
HT: 1-0 **Ref:** Jasseh (Gambia) **Att:** 6,000
Cameroon: Andem – Tataw, Onana, Kunde, Ebwelle – Libih, Kana Biyik, Makanaky – Djonkep (Feutmba 83), Omam Bivik (M'Fede 58), Maboang.
Kenya: Busolo – Makuto, Weche, Oduor, Ochola – D Ochieng, G Onyango (Onwera 76), Motego, S Onyango (Khaduli 58), Odie, Ndolo.

Recriminations flew despite this face saving win for the World Cup finalists. Veteran goalkeeper Nkono said: "We are a joke, preparations were a farce and unless something drastic happens we will make an embarrassment of ourselves in Italy.

Emmanuel Maboang got both goals, one either side of the halftime break.

SEMI-FINALS

March 12 – Algiers
Algeria: 2 (Menad 4, Amani 62)
Senegal: 1 (Serrar 20 os)
HT: 1-1 **Ref:** A Takada (Japan) **Att:** 80,000
Algeria: Osmani – Benhalima, Megharia, Serrar, Abjas (Ait Abderrahmane 68) – El Ouazani, Amani, Saib, Madjer – Oudjani, Menad.
Senegal: Seck – Fall, M Diallo, R Mendy, Diagne – A Mendy, Cisse (Coly 79), Sagna, Mdiaye – A Diallo, Bocande (Ndao 68).

An exciting game of football, with the crowd in glorious voice despite the heavy policing of Islamic fundamentalists.

Four minutes from kick off, Menad netted the first, only for defender Serrar to beat his own keeper after 20 minutes.

Senegal, already without Sane who had not returned from Germany where he was involved in a weekend Bundesliga match, lost skipper Bocande through injury just after conceding a goal in the 62nd minute to Amani.

Bocande's influence would have helped as Senegal swarmed forward looking for the equaliser, but Algeria held firm to win.

March 12 – Annaba
Nigeria: 2 (Okechukwu 18, Yekini 77)
Zambia: 0
HT: 1-0 **Ref:** B Sene (Senegal) **Att:** 30,000
Nigeria: Agu – Uwe, Okechukwu, Anijekwu, Semitoje – Ade Sina, Kpakor, Okocha (Ipaye 57), Omokachi (Ogunluna 69) – Yekini, Elahor.
Zambia: Chabala – Soko, Chombe, E Mulenga, Changwe – Marinka, Msiska (Malitoli 73), Nomba, Mwita (Mwanza 73) – Makwaza, Chikabala.

A shock of sorts as first Uche Okechukwu and then Yekini netted to put the Eagles into a second consecutive final.

A superbly confident Zambia were expecting an easy passage, but were hit at the last minute by the non-arrival of Musonda from Anderlecht.

Nigeria had nothing to lose and it showed as their youngsters played a free flowing same.

Okechukwu's 18th minute goal had the Zambians back-peddling and Yekini's 77th minute strike came as no surprise.

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF
March 15, Algiers
Senegal: 0
Zambia: 1 (Chikabala 73)
HT: 0-0 **Att:** 8,000
Senegal: Mbawe – Fall, M Diallo, Diagne, A Mendy – Sagna, Samb (Mbengue 84), Diarra, A Diallo, Coly, Ndao (Gueye 84).
Zambia: Chabala – Soko, Chomba, E Mulenga, Changwe – Makinka, K Mulenga, Nakwaza, G Mulenga (Msiska 12) – Chikabala, J Bwalya (Mwanza 51).

Zambia turned out a full team, while Senegal had several key players missing in this bronze medal decider.

Chikabala, the best player in the Zambian side, settled the issue after 73 minutes.

THE FINAL

March 16 – Algiers
Algeria: 1 (Oudjani 38)
Nigeria: 0
HT: 1-0 **Att:** 80,000
Algeria: Demani – Benhalima, Kegharia, Serrar, Ait-Abaderrahmane – El Ouazani (Neftah 86), Amani, Saib – Madjer, Oudjani (Rahim 89), Menad.
Nigeria: Agui-Okechukwu, Anijekwu, Semitoje – Uwe (Aminu 12), Adesina, Kpakor, Oliha, Ogunlana (Omokachi 67) – Yekini, Elahor.

Not a particularly impressive advert for African football, but a fine goal from Sochaux's Oudjani settled the issue as expected.

Nigeria had the early play, as a nervous Algeria let the 80,000 crowd get to them.

But then they took charge with El-Ouazani controlling things from midfield and Oudjani found the net after 38 minutes, turning superbly before firing home.

Madjer, playing his last international (although players like him are often tempted back), did not show the same authority as in the early games, but Algeria never looked like losing.

Nigeria were more content to avoid a defeat of the five goal blast in the opening game than win this tournament, their having reached the final being achievement enough for the weakened team.

Fans grew nervous as Algeria failed to take a more aggressive approach, but when it was all over Algiers was turned into a massive street party.

Pele

IN May, 1961, I drove to Berne, in Switzerland to see the European Cup Final between Benfica, and the red hot favourites, Barcelona.

I had intended to go further than Berne, on to Milan to see Internazionale clinch their claim to the Italian League Championship.

But in May the weather can be as unpredictable as Pele with the ball at his feet. The pass through the mountain was closed.

Instead I took the opportunity to watch a Zurich XI play Santos ... with Pele.

Within five minutes Santos were winning 2-0, both were good goals that left the Swiss defence gasping after flurries of one-touch passing. Pele was not involved in either of them, the goals being scored by centre forward Coutinho, and the right half and captain, Zito.

Then Coutinho, who was far more than just a tank, decided it was time to give the big crowd a touch of what they had come to see. He received the ball just inside his own half, and flicked the ball up to catch it on his thigh. A Swiss defender came to challenge, and as he flicked out a foot Coutinho, switched the ball to his other thigh. More Swiss defenders surrounded Coutinho who made no attempt to get away. He just stood there juggling the ball on his thighs, sometimes taking one touch on his right thigh; sometimes two, before flicking the ball to his other thigh.

The Swiss were standing in line to try their luck at dispossessing Coutinho, one defender actually wrestling a colleague out of the way to get a challenge in.

Finally, with five opponents on him, Coutinho let the ball roll down his right leg before trapping the ball between his shin and his big toe. Then he raised his right foot, and began waving it about. Up at shoulder height, Coutinho was balancing on his left foot, turning and twisting, and continually waving the ball around in the air, lodged between toe and shin.

Finally, after what seemed an age, but what was in fact probably only one minute, Coutinho withdrew his right leg, and gave the ball a flick, so that it shot off about 20 metres away.

The stadium erupted with applause, and Pele, who had taken little part in the game seemed a little needled.

He was the man the crowd had come to see and Coutinho was stealing the show. Unfortunately, the Swiss launched an attack after the Coutinho exhibition, to score from a neat move, and Zito, the captain, immediately began making annoyed sounds, clapping his hands, and demanding action.

Pele immediately responded, receiving the ball from Pepe, he beat two men on the penalty spot; beat the first one again, then flicked the ball up and volleyed it into the corner of the net from 10 yards

3-1. Coutinho then scored with a diving header after Pele had beaten three men on the right and crossed, to make it 4-1.

Coutinho then walked out to the left and spoke to Pepe, and seconds later when Pepe received the ball, he flicked the ball up from the grass and gave a short volley to Coutinho, and moved away from his marker. Coutinho volleyed the ball back, and Pepe and Coutinho continued with a series of one touch volleys, while they were in movement.

The crowd rose to them and Pele, still only a boy, finally lost his temper. He was the star, and he made it plain he was going to hold centre stage. Pele intercepted a pass from Pepe, intended for Coutinho, and flicked the ball up high. Pele caught the ball as it came down, on his head, cushioning the impact, so that the ball stayed there, lying on the head of Pele. Coming to attention, Pele marched away with an exaggerated swinging of his arms, like a drunken guardsman on duty outside Buckingham Palace.

He marched for about 50 yards, with Swiss players jumping up with their heads trying to flick the ball away, but each time Pele anticipated his jump and turned away, By the time Pele reached the Zurich goal he was surrounded by opponents, leaving

BY ERIC BATTY

everyone else unmarked. So Pele let the ball roll down his back and flicked the ball away with his heel, to Zito, who was behind him.

Zito produced a delightful chip forward, and there was Pele darting after the ball to catch it and dribble round the goalkeeper twice before scoring. 5-1.

Then came the interval, and Santos must have received a bit of a roasting for they came out to play seriously in the second half. The score rushed up to 8-1 as Pele scored three more goals in five minutes and then went off the field to allow a substitute to come on.

The Zurich XI, scored to make it 8-2. The crowd chanted, Pele, Pele, Pele, but he would not come back. Pele had to perform in the circus again next day, and was having a bath.

For more than ten years Pele was forced to play almost every day, and in the end the Brazilian Government intervened to enforce a football off-season. Between the lst and 15th of January, there was to be no football. Little wonder that by the time Pele was 28 a specialist announced that he had knees of a man of 70.

This was the same Edson Arantes do Nascimento, who had been discovered in Bauru, the son of a former professional living quietly in a village called 'Three hearts'. A former international named Brito, received a call one day from the father of Pele.

"My boy has some talent, why not have a look at him?"

"How old is he?" asked Brito.

"Eleven" said his father. Brito invited the boy to a trial for a week in Bauru, and signed him on for £2 a week. When Pele was 15 Brito took Pele to Santos, and offered the boy for £2,500 and after a trial Pele was signed.

Five years later, Pele was the proud holder of a World Cup winners medal. He had been capped at 17, and taken to the World Cup in Sweden, just for the ride, to gain experience of the big time atmosphere. But when things failed to work out the manager, Vicente Feola, gambled on the unknown boy of 17 with only two previous caps, and right winger Garrincha, only three weeks after a cartilage operation. They made all the difference, and I saw Pele score three goals against an excellent French team in the semi-final, and two more in the final against Sweden.

Pele scored 95 goals for Brazil and more than 1,200 other goals including a record 58 in league matches one season for Santos FC in the Sao Paulo League. He won nine championship medals; four Brazilian Cup medals, and twice he helped Santos win the World Club championship. Twice he helped Brazil win the Copa America, the South American championship, but interspersed were long bouts when he could not play through injury.

Everywhere Pele played there were villains who kicked. They kicked him out in the early stages of the 1962 and 1966 World Cups, so he was denied the right to show his wares at the highest level. But then in 1970 he came back to star in the World Cup, and collect another winners' medal.

At his height Pele had been a wealthy man, who married the daughter of a millionaire. Pele had extensive business interests, including the biggest fleet of taxis in Rio de Janeiro. But the sharks were always after him and his money, and he ended up broke and divorced.

Then Pele was invited to the USA where he starred for the New York Cosmos and made another fortune. This time he took better care, and invested his money wisely.

I had seen Pele in the 1958 World Cup when he was a boy. I had seen the mature man in the 1970 World Cup, and I had seen him at many places like Zurich.

In the exhibition games Pele was protected. He could produce his party tricks. He could score goals of dazzling skill, and never be afraid of injury. He was also closest to the public in those semi-private occasions, playing to an audience that had come to see him.

Pozzo and his all-conquering Italian champions.

1938 WORLD CUP FINAL: ITALY 4, HUNGARY 2

FITTINGLY the 1938 World Cup finals were staged in France, the homeland of the competition's founder, Jules Rimet. However the tournament was to be set against the backdrop of impending world conflict as civil war raged in Spain and Austrians began to experience the reality of their country's forcible annexation to Germany after the Anschluss.

BY NICK BIDWELL

The Final brought together Italy, the modernistic proteges of legendary coach, Vittorio Pozzo, against the skilled Magyars from Hungary. La Squadra Azzura had struggled to defeat the plucky Norwegians in their opening tie, but subsequently overcame the French and Brazil minus Leonidas without undue difficulty. In comparison, Hungary's path to the final had been relatively easier as they coasted past the Dutch East Indies, Switzerland and Sweden, scoring 13 goals while conceding only one.

Relaxing in their leafy retreat in the smart Parisien suburb of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Italians had every reason to feel confident of the final outcome. Since claiming the World Cup on home soil four years previously, they had added Olympic gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and now on the eve of the 1938 final their period of invincibility had stretched to 22 games. Moreover, in 16 meetings with Hungary, Italy had lost on just four occasions while recording eight victories.

Still at Italy's helm was the authoritarian and motivator extraordinaire, Vittorio Pozzo, arguably the greatest of pre-war tacticians. This bushy-haired, bespectacled figure, who regularly wrote for Turin's La Stampa and that venerable old Italian weekly Il Calcio Illustrator, found no problems in translating his futuristic theories into practice on the pitch.

Pozzo had built a team of pace, vision and athleticism with many notable performers. Remaining from their 1934 victory were the celebrated inside-forward duo of captain, Giuseppe Meazza and Giovanni Ferrari, and they formed an inexhaustible supply line of balls for the attackers.

In goal was the agile Aldo Olivieri, whose bravery had thwarted Norway when the Scandinavians seemed likely to upset the holders in the opening match. As for its rearguard, Italy could count on that implacable marker, Pietro Serantoni, and the full-back paring of Alfredo Foni and Pietro Rava.

An integral feature of Pozzo's scheme of things was the harnessing of a speedy flank tandem and Gino Colaussi and Amedeo Biavati fitted the bill perfectly. Bologna's Biavati was uncapped when called into the World Cup squad, but repaid the ever-shrewd Pozzo's judgement with interest. The inventor of the much copied 'over the ball feint', the tricky Biavati invariably left opposition defenders twisting and turning in frustration. Equally quick, Triestina's Colaussi was a classy winger blessed with marksman's knack of poaching vital goals.

Dovetailing beautifully with his fleet-footed wingers, Silvio Piola at centre forward represented a constant danger of opposing defences. Strong of physique and powerful in the air and on the floor, the Lazio number nine played more in the style of an old fashioned English forward. He had been chosen by Pozzo as replacement for Angelo Schiavo, and such was the prowess that when he retired from international football in 1952 at the ripe age of 39 his total of goals for Italy stood at 30 – a figure surpassed only by Gigi Riva.

Hungary, under coach Karoly Dietz, were not lacking the commodity of experience, including no less than six players on World Cup duty in 1934. In the legal-trained forward, Gyorgy Sarosi and Ujpest Dosza's Gyulla Zsengeller, they possessed the attacking potential to worry even the robust Italian rearguard.

In contrast to Italy, unchanged from their semi-final win over Brazil, the Hungarians had to reshuffle their pack. Midfield lynchpin, Joszef Turay was unfit, while full-back Koranji was replaced by the more combative Polgar, and wing-half Toldi with Vincze.

Arriving by coach for the final at the State Colombes in Paris, the self-assured and smiling Italian side chatted with onlookers, while the visibly-nervous Hungarians scurried into the refuge of their dressing-room a full two hours before kick-off.

Before an appreciative crowd of 50,000, the Bordeaux-based referee, Georges Capdeville signalled for hostilities to commence. Immediately Italy began to press forward and in the sixth minute took a deserved lead. Biavati released the 'bulldozer' Piola on the right and the centre-forward's cross was met decisively on the volley at the far post by Colaussi.

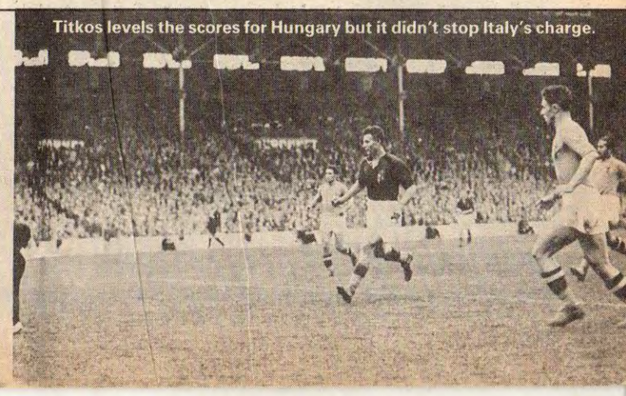
Within two minutes, the cherry shirts of Hungary had equalised. The Uruguayan-born Andreola muffed a clearance to allow Zsengeller to centre. Foni threw himself at the ball but succeeded only in deflecting it to the feet of Hungarian left-winger, Pal Titkos, who smashed a drive past the helpless Olivieri.

However, Italian ascendancy began to reassert itself and Piola hit the post before the 'azzuri' regained the lead in the 16th minute. Again Biavati broke down the flank and pulled the ball across for Piola, who in turn laid the ball off for the balding figure of Ferrari. Surprisingly with the goal at his mercy the inside forward chose not to shoot and passed instead to Andreolo. Monti's successor cut inside and offered a golden chance to Piola, which the bustling centre-forward drove home.

Ten minutes before the pause Italy moved further ahead when Colaussi outpaced the beleagured Hungarian full-back Polgar and beat Szabo for his fourth goal of the tournament.

Although the Magyars pulled a goal back from a disappointing Sarosi midway through the second-half, an Italian victory was never veritably in doubt; even more so when Biavati again turned provider for Piola to score his second goal of the game eight minutes from the end.

There just remained for skipper Meazza to gratefully receive the coveted trophy from French President, Albert Lebrun. Italy's hegemony over world football in the thirties was complete.



Titkos levels the scores for Hungary but it didn't stop Italy's charge.

Milan chief has got it wrong this time

The Brian Glanville COLUMN

WILL Silvio Berlusconi's projected European "TV League" ever come to fruition, and if so, in what form?

Visiting Italy the very week in which news of the idea broke, controversially, in the British Press, I found general scepticism and scant enthusiasm.

"Never," said the football editor of one sports daily, when I asked him when he thought the League would come to pass. Oliviero Beha, most controversial and bold of investigative sports journalists in Italy – a pitifully small but distinguished band – thought the League would be a kind of footballing equivalent of Dynasty. Trash television, that people would watch in much the same way.

Elsewhere, as we know, people think that this is simply a means whereby Europe's big clubs can put pressure on UEFA. The postulated idea that such a tournament might replace the UEFA Cup is clearly a very silly one indeed.

In the first place, many, if not most, of the clubs involved in the Berlusconi League – let us, please, call it that, rather than by the vulgar and arbitrary title of a Super League – would presumably have won their domestic titles, which would qualify them for the European rather than the UEFA Cup.

Anomaly

In the second place, whereas arbitrary must, again, be the word for a Berlusconi League, the UEFA Cup does have a rationale; where its precursor, the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, had little or none. Easy to forget now that with all its strange anomalies, the Inter Cities Cup was the first of them all, in Europe. To qualify, you had queerly, quaintly and notionally to be a club from a city which put on an industrial fair!

I remember the incredulity of that gifted French film director, Louis Malle, when I once told him as much. "You might just as well have a tournament for cities which have a brothel in them!" he observed.

The UEFA Cup, by contrast, is contested by clubs which have finished high in the championships. Indeed, the hope of participation encourages clubs to keep plugging away in the Championship, even if they do not have much true hope of winning it. Why should anything as synthetic as the Berlusconi League take its place?

We all know what lies behind the desire for such a League. The Real Madrids of this world are peeved and piqued by the ever present threat that they may go out in the first round, with all the consequent financial loss. So there is talk of the European Cup turning into a European League, which in turn leads to talk of the Berlusconi tournament.

In fact the grand progenitor of Real Madrid, their old president, Santiago Bernabeu, had always hoped that the Cup would turn into a League. He drew an analogy between such tournaments and the essence of a good wine, which matures in time into a superb one. Jet travel has long made such a tournament feasible, but – irony again – Milan in the 1960s were precisely one of the clubs which opposed the idea.

I remember visiting, in his presidential office in Milan, Franco Carraro, who then sat where Berlusconi sits today. Carraro, of course, is now the Mayor of Rome, having been at various times Minister for Sport and Tourism, president of CONI, the Olympic body, president of FIGC, the Italian FA.

On that occasion, he observed to me that there was no way such clubs as Milan, Juventus and Inter could withdraw from the Italian championship, because it would simply collapse economically, as a result. The same considerations surely apply today, though the Berlusconi League is not, at least for the moment, intended to replace national championships.

What I most dislike about the idea is its cartel like nature. The members of the TV championship would be self appointed and self perpetuating. There would be no relegation. The shop would simply be closed. The tournament would be quite artificial. How attractive would it then be to the fan, be he spectator or viewer?

I suspect that the answer is, not very. Look, as an analogy, at the tournament Wembley devotedly put on, each pre season. Great clubs come to the Empire Stadium: Milan, Kiev, Dynamo, Bayern Munich, Porto, Arsenal, Spurs, Liverpool. But the public doesn't come in any great numbers, because the public couldn't care less, the public knows that the tournament, such as it is – and its formula is a strange one – has no true rationale. Once upon a time, friendly matches between both clubs and countries had an appeal. Think of the crowd storming the gates at Highbury when Spain, first continental team ever to beat England, played there in 1931.

Think of the 90,000-odd fans who swarmed into Stamford Bridge when the Moscow Dynamos played there just after the war in 1945. Think of the vast enthusiasm shown in the 1950s for those friendlies at Molineux when Wolves beat Honved and Moscow Spartak. But the advent of the three European cup tournaments brought a new edge to the club game. What fans now want is the real thing, or what they perceive as the real thing. Friendlies, even at international level, are now largely doubtful quantities. Club tournaments which are mere, commercial constructs are spurned.

Berlusconi is a deeply controversial figure in his own country. The week I was in Italy, he put the cat among the pigeons by publicly demanding that the Italian national team be composed of eight Milan players, plus Poberto Baggio. Azeglio Vicini, Italy's beleaguered manager, asked the Italian F.A. to take proceedings against Berlusconi, but they told him there were insufficient grounds for doing so.

Franco Baresi, star central defender and captain of Milan, who missed the Dutch match, said, placatory, that though he didn't agree with his chairman, Berlusconi had just been talking as a fan. Vicini's remark, that without Marco Van Basten, earlier in the season, Milan had been no better than a middle of the table team, seemed quite germane.

Berlusconi's pronouncement seemed the sillier when the unfortunate Baggio proceeded to fail again, in an international jersey, while another non-Milan player, Pietro Vierchowod, came in for the injured Ferro after a long absence, and proceeded to play Van Basten out of the game. At almost 31 years old, Vierchowod was clearly the leading contender for a place in the Italian central defence beside Franco Baresi.

It was also the week in which Berlusconi was preparing to clear out the old guard at the newspaper LA REPUBBLICA and the magazine L'ESPRESSO, both of which had been greatly critical of him in the past. Scalfarei, the founding editor of LA REPUBBLICA, a daily paper which achieved great success very fast, and adopted a commendably independent, dissident, posture, had sold his 51 per cent of shares to the huge Mondadori publishing empire, little witting that Berlusconi would proceed to buy Mondadori and scoop up LA REPUBBLICA in the process.

One heard unfavourable comparisons being made between the Agnelli-Fiat "tradition" at Juventus, and Berlusconi's pre-eminence at Milan. Not always fairly. The Agnelli, after all, are not aristocracy, simply a family which became enormously rich and powerful through its control of Fiat. And if Berlusconi has been attacked for his membership of the sinister Masonic Lodge P2 (he insists he came in merely at the tail end and reaped no benefit) the relations between the Agnellis and Fascism between the wars – and indeed during the war – hardly bare close examination.

All we are really talking about, surely, is the old money and the new, and if Berlusconi is now being accused of buying success, at least he has bought it, where the Agnellis and Juventus in recent years have failed very signally to do just that.

If we are to get down to cases, Berlusconi actually acquired Van Basten on the cheap, whatever he may be paying him now (£1 million a year or so, on his new contract). If Berlusconi sometimes interferes – as in the odd case of Claudio Borghi – Agnelli was forever criticising Giampiero Boniperti during his Presidency, and was peculiarly provocative to Zibi Boniek, christening him "Belle de Nuit", night time beauty, because he supposedly played his best only in floodlit European games.

When Agnelli attends a Juventus match, supporters sit at his feet, anxious to miss none of his (cultured?) pearls. And there are many. Berlusconi could have made a fool of himself over Borghi, about whose talents he appeared to have a weird fixation. Had he persisted in demanding that Arrigo Sacchi (his own inspired appointment as a manager) bring Borghi back to San Siro and forget Rijkaard, he could have lost both Rijkaard and Sacchi.

Borghi, who has just joined Independente of Buenos Aires, his umpteenth club, was, you may recall, loaned by Milan to Como. There, two successive managers wouldn't put him in the first team, so Berlusconi, still convinced of the young Argentine centre-forwards abilities, brought him back to train at Milanello. Then tried to make him Milan's third foreigner.

On the other hand, Berlusconi was surely right and Sacchi wrong about Daniele Massaro, the winger turned attacking midfielder whom Sacchi lent to Roma against Berlusconi's wishes, only to bring back this season.. with enormous success. Massaro has been scoring a substantial number of goals.

"Buying success" is a charge that has often been levelled against wealthy clubs, down the decades. Arsenal in the 30s were one example, yet Arsenal under Herbert Chapman got Cliff Bastin (Exeter) and Eddie Hapgood (Kettering) for next to nothing, while the great Charlie Buchan came in 1925 from Sunderland for a fee plus £100 a goal.

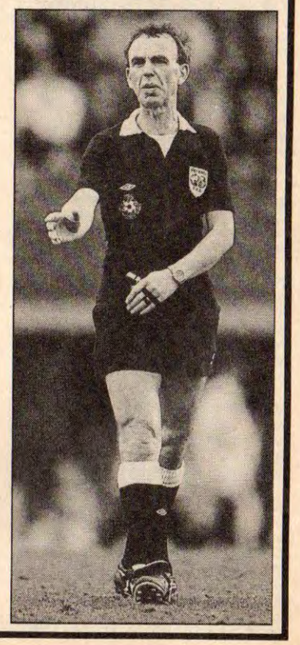
This season, you have only to look at Manchester United to know that a fool and his money are soon parted, that you need judgement and a sound structure as well to achieve success. You're not going to buy it by shelling out a ridiculous £2.3 million for a modest centre-half such as Gary Pallister. If Berlusconi has spent, he has spent well – much better than Agnelli.

This is not an essay in power and money worship. There is a darker side to Milan's success, but to suggest that it has simply been bought would be wrong headed. How much, after all, did Arrigo Sacchi cost when he arrived from Parma, virtually unknown? And how have Juventus fared in terms of managers, since Giovanni Trapattoni left them for Inter?

LEFT: Pietro Vierchowod played Marco Van Basten out of the game in Italy's 0-0 draw in Holland. ABOVE: Silvio Berlusconi – will he get his European League off the ground? RIGHT: Liverpool v Kiev – but where are the fans?

COURTNEY IN FOCUS

WHEN Campanati, head of the Italian FA's refereeing department, recently visited Zurich to suggest that referees be provided with instant replay facilities, he was sent away by Sepp Blatter with a flea in his ear.



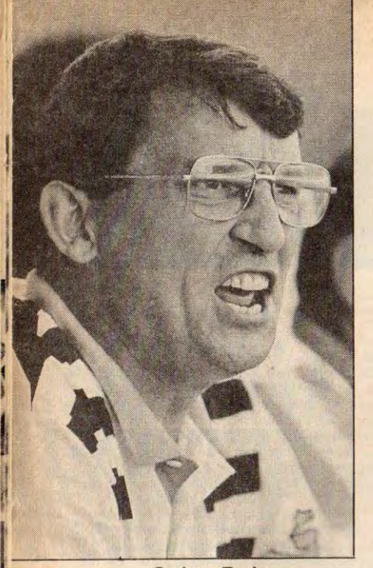
Rather to my surprise, George Courtney, our sole World Cup referee, told me they wouldn't worry him at all and hadn't done so when he officiated in the United States; he felt referees were right 99 per cent of the time. But I must say that the remaining one per cent throws up some strange and worrying anomalies.

I was, for instance, at Wimbledon that cold February night when, at a free kick, Luton's David Preece played the ball three times without let or hindrance from the referee, Kerran Barrett, before taking a return pass to put over a cross from which Dowie headed the winning goal.

And what about the aberration of Mr Vickers at Newcastle in the Cup when Quinn so grossly impeded Manchester United's keeper, Leighton, at a corner, which produced a goal? One day, perhaps, referees will be able to carry tiny TV sets, and use them accordingly, with no threat to their authority.

Now Villa feel the strain

BY DERICK ALLSOP



Graham Taylor.

THE pressure of trying to keep up with Liverpool is beginning to tell. And not for the first time.

A few have succeeded – for a while. The supreme effort inevitably takes its toll and the 'new force' tends to wilt. Arsenal, having snatched the League Championship late last May in that never-to-be-forgotten climax at Anfield, stoutly defended their title for much of this season.

But there has been little conviction in their football and in recent weeks they have slipped well behind Kenny Dalglish's side. The 2-0 defeat at Queen's Park Rangers on the first Saturday in March left them 10 points adrift.

Norwich were the surprise package of last season, though they ran out of steam on the home straight. This time their neat, controlled passing game hasn't functioned consistently and the renewed Championship challenge simply hasn't materialised. Now they languish mid-table.

This season the fresh hopefuls have come from Aston Villa, a side re-shaped and rekindled by Graham Taylor. Their magnificent winter run took them to the top of the First Division and earned them accolades from all quarters.

After their 2-0 victory at Tottenham the nation seemed convinced: Villa really could deny Liverpool the title. They were two points clear with a game in hand. Over an 18-match period, they had earned 46 points compared with Liverpool's 32.

It wasn't statistics alone that swayed opinion. It was the manner of their rise to the summit, their style, their composure, their confidence. All the credentials were, apparently, there.

Taylor's achievement was saluted. He was again presented as the natural successor to Bobby Robson as England manager. Forget Venables said one headline, Taylor's the man for the job. The message came from Villa captain and England World Cup candidate David Platt.

Taylor himself preferred to discuss Villa and their form. He said: "I know people will expect Liverpool to cope with the pressure better than us from now on, but from where I am sitting that is not the case.

"We have all been force-fed on Liverpool's success for years. They have set high standards and if I was looking in from the outside, I would go along with everybody else. But I don't. We are in front of them because we deserve to be. We accept it will be hard to stay ahead but if we do fail, it won't be because we buckle under the pressure.

"We have experience and players like Paul McGrath and Derek Mountfield have something to prove to their former clubs as well. David Platt wants his England place. In this game we have to be able to recognise opportunity as well as grasp it when it is there. My players are capable of both."

So, armed with that self-belief, Villa confronted Wimbledon at home seeking a five-point lead over Liverpool, who were unemployed for the day. What happened? They lost 3-0. It was a dreadful disappointment to Taylor's team and yet most were prepared to accept it was just one of those days. Wimbledon are, after all, renowned for spoiling parties.

The following weekend Liverpool edged back in front with a scarcely devastating 1-0 win against second bottom club Millwall at Anfield. For the benefit of television, Villa were in action 24 hours later, at Coventry. Here was the chance to regain the Championship lead and plug any leaks in confidence.

A 2-0 defeat not only kept them a point behind Liverpool, it suggested some of those title credentials might not be authentic.

Coventry, anxious to refloat their ship after going down to Nottingham Forest in the semi-finals of the Littlewoods (League) Cup, were good value for their three points. Only some instinctive and agile goalkeeping by Nigel Spink kept Villa in the match during the first half.

Early in the second half Spink was powerless as Coventry scored twice in a minute and effectively killed the contest. Substitute Kevin Drinkell's first touch gave him an opportunity close-in, his second acepted it and gave Coventry the lead.

Villa were outclassed in their 2-0 defeat at Coventry.

Critical

Villa lost central defender Derek Mountfield to an injury at this critical point and before they could re-group David Smith was jinking inside full-back Chris Price to hammer a fine second from the edge of the penalty area.

Villa substitute and club captain Stuart Gray headed against a post but it was too little, too late. His colleagues had failed to raise their game and they knew it.

Platt and Gordon Cowans, one of the League's outstanding players this season, were frankly way below their best. Tony Daley, that explosive winger, frequently threatened but never truly delivered. Ian Ormondroyd, the least likely success story, made scant contribution to the cause and was eventually withdrawn from duty.

Where, then did that leave Villa? Taylor's response was: "Up there with Liverpool with 11 games left."

From the outside looking in, yes, you have to say it is going to be Liverpool's title. But for the sake of English football as well as Villa, here's hoping Taylor's men don't buckle. We desperately need a live contest.

Forest followed up their Littlewoods Cup triumph against Coventry – 2-1 over two legs – by nosing in front of Arsenal, on goal difference to third place in the League.

However, the 1-0 win that took them there was highly controversial. Forest winger Gary Crosby headed the ball out of the hand of Manchester City goalkeeper Andy Dibble and then planted the ball into the net for the only goal.

City, led my manager Howard Kendall, protested but referee Roger Gifford was unmoved. The goal stood. England World Cup referee George Courtney watched the incident on television and said he would not have awarded the goal. He reasoned that although Crosby had not broken the letter of the law he had broken the spirit of the law.

Others, including former England goal-poacher Jimmy Greaves, argued that goalkeepers are an over-protected species and that referee Gifford was right to allow the goal.

It was a debate full of mileage. It revived memories of the George Best-Gordon Banks incident, when the Northern Ireland winger kicked the ball away from the England 'keeper and tucked it into the net. His quick thinking did not win over the referee.

The defeat was a serious blow to relegation-threatened City, though the three clubs below them, Luton, Millwall and Charlton, all lost that day. Millwall had already sacked manager John Docherty and replaced him with Bob Pearson.

Luton were Manchester United's first victims at Old Trafford for four months. Luton managed their first goal at the ground for 31 years but were given a 4-1 hiding after squandering an easy chance at 0-0.

Leeds continued to head the Second Division, despite a 1-0 defeat at Watford. Sheffield United were second, Swindon third and Joe Royle's rampant Oldham fourth.

Inconsistent

West Ham started the season with high hopes but their campaign has been jolted by the Lou Macari affair as well as inconsistent results. The manager was fined 1,000 by the FA for his part in the illegal betting case at Swindon. When West Ham refused to support his appeal he walked out.

West Ham, urged by their fans to return to the 'old ways', called up one of the club's all-time favourites, Billy Bonds, to take over from Macari. Bonds said: "I'm not under pressure from anyone to make the play-offs. I'm sure I will make mistakes, I just hope there won't be any big ones."

As English football looks to an all-seater future, Mersey rivals and neighbours Liverpool and Everton are considering sharing a proposed £125m new stadium on the outskirts of the city. Both clubs have agreed to study the plans for the 67,000 capacity stadium.

Portadown open up the race

BY MARK WEST

The Ulster championship title race is wide open this time with only ten points separating the top nine teams.

Such a closely fought campaign has been a welcome breath of fresh air following the almost perennial two horse race between Linfield and Glentoran over the past decade.

Portadown's role as pacesetters may flatter to deceive as genuine title contenders. This has certainly been the case over the years.

The 'Ports' joined the League in 1924 and have never been demoted. By that same token, however, they have never won the championship – or the Irish Cup for that matter. The Shamrock Park club have been runners-up on five occasions. Twice – in 1960-61 and 1961-62 – they did finish on par with Linfield at the top of the table. Both times they were denied the elusive title following defeat in a test match with Linfield.

In addition they have appeared in four Irish Cup Finals – the most recent was last term when Linfield beat them 1-0 at the Oval – and ended up losers on each occasion.

Although there is a new resolve at the club and a seemingly more consistent team on the field it remains to be seen whether Portadown will break the hold of the 'big two' of Linfield and Glentoran.

Portadown's cause has not been helped by the suspension until the end of the season of Marty Magee. Magee, last season's Northern Ireland Footballer of the Year, is the club's current leading goalscorer.

In December Magee was sent-off against Carrick Rangers and then was alleged to have head-butted a linesman. The Irish FA's senior clubs commitee found him guilty.

Three competitions have already been decided this season. The variation of three different winners reflects the health of club football.

Glenavon celebrated their centenary by lifting the Roadferry Cup. They beat Newry Town 3-1 in the Final at Windsor Park with Geoff Ferris (2) and Stevie Conville getting the vital first-half goals.

Glentoran retained the Ulster Cup for the third successive season (they beat Glenavon 3-1 with Gary McCartney (2) and Billy Caskey the scorers) while Linfield did likewise in the Gold Cup although they did require a replay before overcoming Portadown in the Final.

The Irish Cup, however, will not be returning to The Showgrounds following Ballymena United's shock elimination by junior side Dungannon Swifts.

Dungannon held the County Antrim side to a 1-1 draw away from home in the original fifth round tie. The same score was recorded on home territory after extra time. Penalties became the decisive factor with Dungannon proving the better spot kickers by 4-2 to record the result of the round.

These are testing times for Northern Ireland's oldest club Distillery. Once again they languish at the bottom of the table.

Billy Hamilton has been drafted in as manager in a bid to work miracles and stop the rot. The club boasts an illustrious history which includes six championships and twelve Irish Cup truimphs, the last of these honours though was in 1971 and the future looks bleak.

On target – Billy Caskey.

WELSH AIM FOR CHAMPIONS' CUP

BY MEL AP IOR THOMAS

Wales will have their own 'proper' championship by 1992-93. This First Division will be the pinnacle of a pyramid system of direct promotion and relegation covering the whole of Wales; the present Abacus League will form the Second Division (South) while a new League being set up for next season will form the Second Division (North).

The new league, to be called the CYMRU ALLIANCE, will be fed from the three current top leagues in the north and centre of the country. Sixteen clubs from these leagues – Warwick International Welsh Alliance, MANWEB Central Wales League and T.I.B Welsh League (Wrexham Area) – have expressed strong interest and were formally applying by March 14.

The more progressive clubs in Wales have in the past had to turn to the English Leagues to progress and 11 clubs are currently linked in this way, but this new formula, it is hoped, will bring them back to the fold.

This last point could cause a problem for the FAW in that they hope to gain entry in to European Champions' Cup and UEFA Cup for their champion and runner-up respectively. However, UEFA could block the move as FAW member clubs play in a foreign league. The FAW is now being pressured to ban any club which decides to remain outside the new system from the Welsh Senior Cup and indeed from any bond with the FAW thus forcing them to seek full English FA membership.

Clydebank shocked Scottish football with their Fourth Round win over St. Mirren.

Bankies in the black

BY DAVE SMITH

WITH Rangers marching relentlessly, albeit somewhat stealthily of late, towards the Premier League title, it's the Scottish Cup which is keeping the 1989-90 season alive.

And nowhere is the interest in the competition greater than the West side of Glasgow where, in the shadows of the city's shipyards, Clydebank have created a small piece of history.

The Bankies, formed only in 1965, reached the semi-finals of a major competition for the first time when they overcame the brave challenge of Second Division Stirling Albion, after a replay.

The 1-0 victory, courtesy of a goal by Pat Kelly, earns the First Division club a crack at Glasgow giants Celtic at Hampden Park. A real Prince v Paupers clash if ever there was one.

While Celtic are rarely out of the limelight – or out of the black at the bank – Clydebank are faced with a constant struggle to avoid anonymity ... and the wrath of the bank manager.

But, for the time being at least, that's all about to change because the club which normally has to sell it's best players to survive can expect to rake in at least £100,000 from their cup exploits.

Should the unthinkable happen and Clydebank break out temporarily from the shadows of Glasgow's aristocrats by dumping Celtic on the seats of their expensive pants, the Bankies will be the toast of Scotland.

Yet, while the Hampden Park encounter provides the romance for which cup competitions are renowned, the other Semi-final – to be contested by Aberdeen and Dundee United at Tynecastle – is likely to contain little in the way of friendship.

Aberdeen, of course, are still in with an outside chance of pipping Rangers to the Premier Division post. But that doesn't mean their quest for a Cup double (they raised the Skol Cup in October) will be any less determined.

Similarly, Dundee United will go into battle with guns ablazing hell-bent on salvaging something from a mediocre season which could leave them empty-handed and in a mid-table position with little or nothing to show for the their efforts.

No such problems face table-topping Rangers, however. At least that appears to be the case.

Having made their exit from the Scottish Cup at the Fourth Round stage, when Celtic avenged earlier Old Firm defeats, Rangers are now left to concentrate their efforts on the race for the League title.

Graeme Souness' well-oiled machine seemed to be coasting to another comfortable Championship triumph until a run of four League games without a win set one or two alarm bells ringing, albeit quietly, around Ibrox.

Four draws, against Motherwell, Hearts, Dundee and St Mirren, took the wind out of the sails of Johnston, McCoist and Co. But still only a fool would bet against them.

Punish

Meanwhile, on the international front, coach Andy Roxburgh sent shock waves through his squad by carrying out his threat to punish those players who missed the 'get-together' in Genoa some weeks ago.

Liverpool pair Steve Nicol and Gary Gillespie discovered that Mr Roxburgh is not a man to be messed with when they were left out of the Scotland squad to face Argentina, unfairly in many people's view.

Anfield boss Kenny Dalglish, the man responsible for stopping his players' visit to Italy, was furious. Roxburgh, to his credit though, was simply being true to his word.

He said he would give preference to those who made the trip to Genoa as part of the squad's World Cup preparations. And clearly he meant it.

So the World Cup hopes of Nicol and Gillespie are hanging by a thread but, as Mr Dalglish pointed out, Mr Roxburgh could be 'cutting off his nose to spite his face'.

SPAIN BY GRAHAM TURNER

Aldridge goals look good, but ...

COVERING Spanish football can be frustrating. It would be nice, for example, to talk about John Aldridge, the Republic of Ireland striker who, since his move from Liverpool last September, has done a superb job for Real Sociedad, averaging two goals every three games and silencing the snipers who were desperate to persevere with 26 years of all-Basque policy at the San Sebastian club.

It would be nice to do Sevilla's fine revival under Argentine-Chilean coach Vicente Cantatore, one of the shrewdest managers in Spain. Sevilla had slumped to 13th place in December with 13 points from 15 games, but 16 from their next 10 fixtures put them right back in the running for a European place, thanks in great part to the superb goalscoring form of Austrian striker Toni Polster, still gunning for runaway leader Hugo Sanchez at the top of the scoring charts.

And it would be nice to dedicate space to Sevilla's impressive 4-0 demolition of second-placed Valencia in one of the best matches of the season.

It would be nice to give Javier Clemente credit for setting a new long-life record as Jesus Gil's seventh manager in three years before his own inevitable dismissal at Atletico Madrid. The outspoken Clemente had, amid internal back-stabbing, presidential roastings, innumerable law suits and rumours of dismissal, steered Atletico into second place before Joaquin Peiro was named caretaker.

It would be nice to dedicate some space to Bulgarian striker Lubo Penev's excellent first season at Valencia; to examine Athletic Bilbao's poor record of less than a point per game since Howard Kendall's dismissal last November – a record which augurs ill for current manager Chechu Rojo; or to analyse the situation at Spain's only European survivor, Valladolid. The violet-and-whites sacked Yugoslav coach Josif Skoblar in the middle of their Cup-Winners' Cup tie against Djuurgarden and edged the Swedes out with former player Jose More on the bench. More resigned after a 1-0 home defeat by Logrones, and Valladolid took on Monaco in the quarter-finals with club stalwart Fernando Redondo in charge.

But, niceties apart, it always seems to boil back down to the 1990 cup finalists ... the Big Two, Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Paranoid

While Real Madrid have become paranoid about the European Cup, Barcelona are developing a similar paranoia about the Spanish league. And after their 3-2 defeat in the Bernabeu stadium, Cruyff, Koeman, Laudrup, Bakero and the rest of the £15 million superteam admitted that, with a nine-point deficit on Real, they'd blown it again.

This time they blew it in one of the strangest games ever seen in Madrid. When Hugo Sanchez hit his 25th league goal from the penalty spot in the first minute of the second half to put Real 3-0 up, half the press box started thumbing through record books to find the last time Real had hit Barcelona for six (1949).

But all this was to prove the first dimension of an amazingly three-dimensional game. John Toshack's team interpreted, much to his post-match annoyance, the remainder of the second half as a cakewalk and abruptly ceased to exist as a unit.

Their disarray was so acute that when Ronald Koeman shaped up to take a free kick on the right in the 55th minute, central defenders Ruggeri and Sanchis were in the wall 30 yards out and Barcelona striker Salinas was allowed a free header from eight yards with only Michel making a token attempt at marking him.

When Salinas smacked home a second two minutes later, the Catalans were really among the pigeons. Toshack shouted himself hoarse and tried to stem the collective panic by sending on Solana for Michel and Paco Llorente for Hierro.

Garcia de Loza then denied Barcelona of an equaliser by Roberto when he controversially adjudged Salinas to have fouled hesitant goalkeeper Buyo.

In the closing minutes, the match attained its third dimension when Ronald Koeman kicked Paco Llorente a yard in the air right in front of the dug-outs. Out came the red card for Koeman (the first of his career, he maintains) and when Garcia de Loza asked Johan Cruyff to move back from the touchline and stop protesting, the Dutch coach refused point blank and was promptly ordered to join the Dutch sweeper on the route to the dressing-rooms.

Seconds later, Brazilian stopper Aloisio, fielded at right-back in this game, rounded off a scuffle with Martin Vazquez by butting the Real midfielder in the face and became the third foreign member of the Barcelona staff to see the red card.

All that didn't stop the Barcelona press from claiming on the following morning: "They Lost With Their Heads Held High." Or: "Barcelona Save Their Pride and Honour". Such stirringly partisan sentiments were certainly needed to rally morale after a month of misery for the Catalan club.

While Real Madrid were dropping two points in 1-1 draws against Valencia and Mallorca (their first point lost at home) Barcelona dropped three by drawing 0-0 at home to Oviedo and losing 1-0 in Castellon. To rub salt into wounds, Zaki saved Ronald Koeman's 13th penalty kick of the season. Ex-Real Madrid left-back Garcia Cortes made no mistake with the spot kick awarded to Mallorca nine minutes from time, and Cruyff's team had surrendered another costly point.

To make matters worse, there was trouble behind the scenes. One of Barcelona's 106,000 members had taken the club to court, alleging that the newly-introduced 50 per cent increase on membership fees (including a 'special supplement' of £26) was illegal practice. The judge not only upheld the objection but ruled that improper procedures had also been used to approve the club's annual budget of £28 million at last August's annual meeting.

An Extraordinary General Meeting was hastily called and tumultuous debate lasted into the early hours with the Barcelona board publicly admitting for the first time that the club is suffering cash flow problems and that if the 'special supplement' were not approved "the institution could embark on a dangerous downhill slope". After counts and recounts, the increase was passed by just three votes.

However, the significant note of the stormy meeting was that, even though his name didn't figure on a purely financially-orientated agenda, Johan Cruyff was the butt of severe criticism for his handling of a super-expensive team which has all but mortgaged the future of the club.

They may yet win the cup. A 2-1, 1-1 win over Valencia squeezed them into the final. But more fireworks are assured. They will face, once more, a Real Madrid team who saw off Cadiz 1-0, 3-0.

EAST GERMANY

No more Dynamo

GUETSCHOW of Dresden continued to lead the goalscorers as the 'Oberliga' got back to business and the champions saw off Bischofswerda before a struggle for a point in Halle.

'Reborn' FC Berling – now without the Dynamo and, it is to be hoped, the 'Stasi' – have started at a cracking pace despite the absence of Thom now at Leverkusen.

'FC' began the new half-term with a 5-1 win over the Brandenburgers, Stahl, to go into third place behind a faltering Magdeburg who dropped three of the first four points available and gave way to Dresden at the top.

LK continued in the doldrums managing to beat Wismut 2-1 at home before falling 3-0 to the bottom club in Bischofwerda.

In Leipzig, as elsewhere, the future of the clubs is uncertain and will depend on the outcome of the elections and the position when a new and independent Fussball-Verband is set up.

The big worry is that there will be further economic problems for the Second Division, 'Liga', clubs whose sponsors will no longer support them or, indeed, be obliged to.

RUMANIA

STEAUA MYSTERY

WHAT happened to Steaua's income from the 1986 European Cup win?

It has been revealed that a secret bank account was opened and around half a million dollars banked. It was added to the Steaua earnings abroad from tournaments but remained at the disposition of the Ceausescu clan rather than the football club.

After the fall of the dictator, Steaua expected to be able to use their earnings but the Ministry of Sport said 'No!'

Army Minister Angelescu and Chief of Staff Gavrila decided that a substantial proportion of the money be paid to the clubs in which Steaua's top players were discovered.

Thus Sportul, Farul, Timisoara and Craiova will be repaid for their youth work, if somewhat belatedly.

Whether they will have any further claim when Hagi & Co move west remains to be seen but at least the Ministry of Sport has gone some way towards 'demilitarising' sport and seeing some justice for out of town clubs. Angelescu went as far as saying: "The days of Steaua as a military unit are numbered."

Following some southern European training and friendlies Steaua visited England, for a friendly with Bournemouth.

Despite little advance publicity a crowd of 4,000 saw Hagi show a few tricks in orchestrating a 3-1 win.

ITALY BY BRIAN GLANVILLE

BONIPERTI HAD TO GO

Zavarov – loaned out.

OUT: Boniperti.

After 44 years, as player and president, Giampiero Boniperti has left Juventus. Born not far away from Turin, "Boni," ever the jeune premier, with his blond curly hair, his blue eyes, got in to the first team in no time; and at 19, the following year, he made his debut for Italy. They lost 5-1 and "Boni" was out of the team for nearly two years. But back he came, at outside right rather than centre forward, and there he largely stayed, becoming captain of club and country.

Why has "Boni" gone? The immediate cause was, it seems, an attack on his transfer policy by Michel Platini, who charged that he had thrown away millions of pounds of Gianni Agnelli's Fiat money. What clearly stung Boni was that the attack should appear in a Turin newspaper, La Stampa, virtually the Fiat house journal. It was the last straw – but no more than the last straw.

The truth being that Boni and "l'avvocato," Lawyer Agnelli, have intermittently been at loggerheads for years now. Most recently , it was over Andreas Moller, the lanky West German midfielder, whom Boni fancies, and arranged to buy, but whom Agnelli doesn't rate at all. Before that, they clashed over the little Soviet international midfielder, Zavarov. Agnelli wanted him, Boniperti didn't.

As we know, Agnelli had his way; then tried to get rid of Zavaroz, first sending him back to Kiev, while trying to fix him up on loan in Italy, then finding that Juventus were obliged to take him back.

Agnelli's friends and cronies were perpetually whispering in his ear that Boniperti had lost his touch, that he no longer understood the international or even the domestic transfer market.

There was ammunition for such a campaign, above all when Platini, always the apple of Agnelli's eye – while he never ceased to goad and provoke Zibi Boniek – left Juventus.

Juve spent a fortune on what largely turned out to be dud players. Ian Rush, alas, was one of them; but was it really his fault when everybody had been saying for months that there'd be no one to give him the ball?

To pay over £2 million for a mediocre figure like Magrin, the Atalanta midfielder, seemed daft. As did the colossal expenditure on Tricella, the Verona sweeper, De Agostini, their left-back and Alessio, a Southerner who couldn't even find a regular place in the Juventus attack.

Hurt and humiliated, Boni insists that when the time comes he will answer all the criticism. One of the problems surely was that he was always president in name only.

He made Boniperti rich, after he retired from football, putting him into agricultural machinery; but he remained the patron, the power.

I knew Boniperti as a player in the early 1950s, when I was living Italy. I found him friendly, charming, occasionaly ruthless.

Hard to forget an epic Lazio-Juventus match in the spring of 1955 at the Olympic Stadium. Lazio were very much the underdogs. George Raynor, their English manager, used the Swede, Siggi Lofgren, to close mark Boni, in the role, he said, of "G Man."

It worked rather too well; to the extent that an irritated Boniperti, late in the game, felled Lofgren with his elbow to the jaw.

Antonazzi, the Lazio right-back, came rushing towards the fray, only to be felled by an elbow smash from the massive Juve centre-half, Ferrario. In due course, calm was restored.

I myself find it hard to forgive Boni eight words, pronounced in April, 1974, when the sports editor of the Sunday Times nobly sent me to Turin, to tell Boni we had Juventus bang to rights over the Lobo-Solti affair, the attempt by the Hungarian fixer, Solti, to bribe Lobo before the Derby-Juventus game in the European Cup semi-final.

When I had finished, he just said , "Brian: se ci sono questi pazzi in giro. If there are these madmen going around." And then: "What's happening in English football?"

The "madmen," we subsequently proved, had actually signed a document in Holland in 1971 on behalf of Juventus!. Ah ,well. One can still feel a little sorry for Boni; the president who really wasn't. And wonder how bright, Luca Di Montezemola, head of Italia 90, will fare, if he takes the Juventus job.

BELGIUM BY IAIN MACLEOD

Brugge push ahead

CLUB BRUGGE, enjoying a revival in fortunes after some years in the doldrums, remain the pacesetters at the top of the first division.

These are interesting times for Belgian football, not least because of the unusual situation of having four representatives in the quarter-finals of the three major European club competitions. Brugge, significantly, are among them.

Brugge's hopes of the championship are likely to be enhanced if chief rivals Anderlecht and Mechelen, continue their fight on two fronts. Anderlecht have shown inconsistency of late while champions Mechelen, still without a new coach and still defensively sound, have major problems in front of goal.

Anderlecht, normally a powerful force at home suffered a bad loss when another of the season's surprise packets, Antwerp, came to Parc Astrid and shocked the 25,000 crowd by departing with two valuable points.

The West German Lehnhoff scored the only goal which keeps Antwerp's slim hopes of the title alive and pushed the Brussels outfit in to second place.

Anderlecht's rare home defeat was to provide Brugge with an opportunity they did not squander; at Kortrijk, they won easily by 3-0 to move two points clear at the top. Mechelen also scored three without reply, against luckless Ekeren.

Anderlecht, however, recovered their poise the following weekend when they maintained their fine away form to win 3-0 at Racing Mechelen, whose town rivals, and league champions were that day involved in a match that might ultimately determine whether or not they could retain the title.

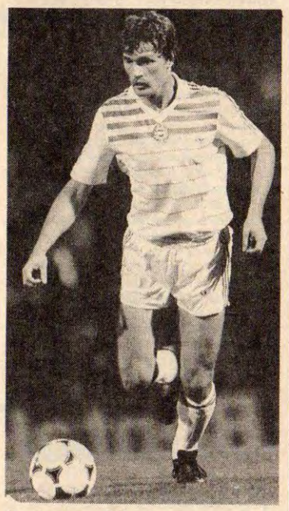
Away to high flying Brugge, Mechelen faced their biggest test since Dutch coach Ruud Krol was dismissed in mid-season – and they failed miserably.

After an unbeaten run of 19 matches – 10 of them drawn – Mechelen's famed defence collapsed under the Brugge onslaught in which Hungarian sweeper, Laszlo Disztl who scored Brugge's third, had a marvellous game which more than justified the club's decision to sign him.

Antwerp, having just won in Brussels for the first time in 25 years, then faltered a little when they had to share the spoils at home to Cercle Brugge, and lost away to St.Truiden, a defeat which almost certainly put paid to their title hopes.

Brugge then discovered that their trip to Ghent was fraught with problems; the home side took the lead twice and it required goals from Farina and van Brolj to save a vital point.

Anderlecht,though, did narrow the gap to a single point when they rediscovered their scoring touch to beat Lokeren 7-0 at home. Mechelen's two-goal victory at home to Lierse kept them three points behind the leaders.



Destroyer – Disztl.

Brugge made no mistake the following week, thrashing Ekeren by 4-0; there was no change at the top – Anderlecht, again finding the net with some regularity hit five past Charleroi, Mechelen won 3-1 at Beveren, while Antwerp, who scored four without reply easily won the port derby.

There is little doubt that the title will be decided in the last games of the season and with Brugge able to concentrate on the championship, while their rivals chase European glory, they appear to have a vital advantage.

SOVIET UNION
By BOB VAUGHAN

Tbilisi quit Soviet League

IF Lithuania is politically the leader in the independence stakes then on the football front Georgians are the leaders.

All the efforts and pressures of Moscow have failed to prevent the Southern republic's FA going it alone.

The Georgian first division clubs, led by Tbilisi Dynamo have not entered the 1990 Soviet Championship.

Nodar Akhalkatsi, Tbilisi's coach when they won the Cup-Winners' Cup in Dusseldorf, says Georgia has a right to be free and independence will do nothing but assist the development of the country's soccer.

"We want to be the masters in our own house," he said. He has no doubts the economics of Georgian football will prove sound and that it will prosper in the hands of "our own professionals."

The GFA has the support of the Georgian Popular Front and may well not be the first republic FA to withdraw from the USSR federation and the 'Elite League.'

For 1990 it will have to operate with 14 clubs. Only one will be relegated and three will be promoted from division two at the end of the season. It will thus be back to 16 for 1991 or, that is what Moscow intends.

HOLLAND BY SIMON KUPER

Romario blow could be last straw

QUARRELS at PSV Eindhoven have cost the team crucial points. PSV drew 1-1 at Den Bosch, a side threatened with relegation, and lost 3-1 to Roda Kerkrade, who have surprised even themselves by challenging PSV for the championship. This left PSV struggling to stay ahead of Vitesse Arnhem, Roda and Ajax at the top of the table.

PSV are indisputably Holland's strongest side, and they have won the championship for four years running.

Yet their chances of winning a fifth title are slim especially as Brazilian striker Romario is out for the rest of the season after breaking a leg against Den Haag.

After Gerald Vanenberg, Romario, Holland's leading scorer with 21 goals, is the player PSV could least afford to lose. By comparison, the second highest scorer in the league is PSV's Wim Kieft; he has 13 goals so far; eight fewer than Romario.

Kieft, for all his ability, is PSV's biggest problem, the man who could well stand in the way of a fifth successive championship. After PSV's manager Guus Hiddink dropped him for the Cup match against Feyenoord, Kieft told the press that he wanted to leave the club immediately.

Manchester United, Chelsea, Atletico Madrid and Sporting Gijon all showed interest, but none could afford the £1.8 million that PSV were demanding.

Kieft is a proud man, and to be dropped would cost him his place in Holland's squad for the World Cup. He and his friend Soren Lerby therefore cowed Hiddink into restoring him in to the side, at the expense of young Danish international Fleming Povlsen.

Kieft is unlikely to be dropped again this season. But the affair has scarred the relationships between Kieft and Lerby on the one hand and PSV's creative player Vanenberg, on the other.

For it was Vanenberg, together with goalkeeper Hans Van Breukelen, who demanded that Kieft be dropped. They knew that Hiddink wanted to continue with Kieft, so they went behind their manager's back and put their case to PSV's general manager, Kees Ploegsma.

Vanenberg prefers Povlsen to Kieft; the Dane is more mobile and thus a better target for Vanenberg's passes. Also, Vanenberg dislikes Kieft and Lerby, both of whom he has known for a decade. He has said that 31-year-old Lerby is "worn out" as a player, and he has crtiticised the Dane for shouting at his team-mates.

With Romario ruled out, Kieft and Povlsen are both able to play. Lerby will retire at the end of the season, and Kieft will almost certainly leave PSV, probably for Mechelen, so next year should be quieter.

For the rest of the season, though, PSV will remain a club in turmoil.

The worst that could happen to PSV is that they fail to win the league. The worst that could happen to Groningen is that they will cease to exist. Groningen have debts of £3 million, and the Dutch Inland revenue department have yet to decide how much to fine the club for tax frauds between 1985 and 1988.

It was recently revealed that Renze de Vries, a millionaire pig breeder who was Groningen's chairman until last year, made illegal payments to players.

Cliff-hanger

The new chairman, Wim Everards, has admitted that Groningen are "on the edge of the cliff". Everards hopes to persuade Groningen's creditors to withdraw their claims; a problem is that two of his fellow directors are themselves among the creditors.

Groningen's crisis comes at a time when Ajax are still waiting to hear how much they will have to pay for their own tax frauds. Interestingly, the former Ajax chairman responsible for the frauds, Ton Harmsen, was a member of the board of the Dutch FA – as was Rense de Vries.

As for Feyenoord, their sponsors, the computer company HCS, have been advertising with a downbeat slogan recently: "The Losers of Today are the Winners of Tomorrow".

The first half of the slogan is certainly appropriate: Feyenoord, once one of Europe's most famous teams, are currently third from bottom of the Dutch league. But don't bet on the club becoming the "Winners of Tomorrow".

Feyenoord have been in decline for the last fifteen years. Whereas in the 1970s they averaged crowds of 40,000, nowadays they draw about 10,000.

Feyenoord is a sick club, its former good health gone forever. It may improve slightly, but it will never again find itself among Europe's best.

The reason is that football in recent years has undergone rapid commercial development. In the last two or three years sponsors have spent significantly more money on football than in the past. Feyenoord, unlike Ajax and PSV, failed to profit from the boom: the club's organisation was in such disorder that canny businessmen refused to invest.

The best example is the Rotterdam millionaire John van Dijk, currently chairman of Feyenoord's neighbours SVV Schiedam. He had supported Feyenoord since his childhood, and when he became rich he put some money in the club. But after quarrelling with a few of Feyenoord's directors he moved to SVV.

Then they were the worst and poorest side in Dutch football, now they are rich, growing, and virtually certain of promotion.

SVV are gaining fans as fast as Feyenoord are losing them. Recently, SVV borrowed Feyenoord's stadium because their own was too small to accommodate the fans they expected for a crucial league match against NAC Breda. The match drew over 10,000 spectators, which is more than usually watch Feyenoord.

Brazilian striker Romario could miss the World Cup after breaking a leg against Den Haag.

TURKEY BY HASAN CEMALI

Besiktas lead the way

THE Turkish league recommenced after the winter break with a thrilling four-horse race for the championship.

Besiktas (39 points) had a four-point lead over Trabzonspor who have enjoyed something of a renaissance under the influence of Urban Braems and Jean-Marie Pfaff. They last won the title in 1983/84.

Fenerbahce were on 34 points despite being without key players Toni Schumacher and Ridvan, while Galatasaray stay in touch (30 points) although they have missed Tanju and Ugur.

In the League 416 goals were scored in 153 games and Besiktas managed by Gordon Milne, rattled in ten goals in one match against Adana Demirspor. But this level of entertainment has not proved popular with the Istanbul public so far. Gates are down 73,000 to 177,993.

Although the League programme has featured some keenly fought games this season, as shown by the 26 sending-offs and 455 yellow cards, extensive TV coverage is seen to be the principal reason why gates are down.

In particular the live transmission each Saturday of one of the three Istanbul clubs has not helped. The clubs complain that the £13,000 compensation paid by TV is far from satisfactory.

Sepp Piontek, who managed Denmark with such distinction, has been enlisted as the new national team boss for the World Cup.

The rumour that Franz Beckenbauer will take charge of Fenerbahce after the World Cup has prompted the former West German goalkeeper Schumacher to say that he will leave the club if his old national boss gets the job.

GREECE

Olympiakos' double struggle

OLYMPIAKOS and AEK Athens are still locked together in the race for the League title despite mounting financial problems for the former.

Olympiakos President Argyris Saliarelia is adamant that: "Olympiakos will go on. We are not afraid of the future."

Saliarelia has also been the target of angry fans who are unhappy with the decision to close Gate 7 at the Karaisakis Stadium as it is well known as the area where the club's hooligan followers congregate.

On the playing side, the return to form of Hungarian midfielder Lajos Detari has been the principal reason for the upturn in the team's fortunes.

Meanwhile, the Athens Court of First Instance rejected a lawsuit submitted by Olympiakos against the Bank of Crete for 200 million drachmas.

The Bank had demanded that Olympiakos pay back the sum of £2.3 million which the club's former president, George Koskotas, who was also owner of the Bank of Crete at the time, had given to the team from bank funds.

Olympiakos are now suing the Bank of Crete for £700,000 in payment of the bank's advertising on the player's shirts. The Court of First Instance has rejected the suit, claiming that the information provided by Olympiakos was insufficient.

At the halfway stage of the season (after nine matches) AEK had the best goalscoring (34 goals) and defensive record (seven goals).

Panathinaikos had attracted the largest crowds – a total of (170,675 for the first eight games despite one match being held in an empty stadium) earning them receipts of £432,200. This contrasted with Apollen Athens who attracted only 17,462.

WEST GERMANY BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

Beckenbauer's boys beaten at last

WEST GERMANY'S first World Cup test ended in a first defeat since the 1988 European championships.

Against a rejuvenated and clever French team the Germans lost 2-1.

The long winter break had taken its toll as well as injuries which ruled out defenders Guido Buchwald and Jürgen Kohler, as well as top striker Rudi Völler. Also missing were four other squad members, defenders Hansi Dorfner and Holge Fach, midfielder Günter Hermann and striker Frank Mill.

Only 16 men, including four Italian 'mercenaries', flew to Montpellier and only Pierre Littbarski was used as substitute.

This was West Germany's 56th match since Beckenbauer took over in 1985. In that period he has used 64 players, of whom 38 were newcomers. The last was Uwe Bein (Eintracht Frankfurt) who in Montpellier was playing for the first time from the start. But he didn't shine and neither did the others, with the possible exception of Thomas Hässler.

Before the World Cup the Germans will play Uruguay on April 25, Czechoslovakia on May 26 and Denmark on May 30.

Discussions over the return of goalkeeper Uli Stein received fresh impetus with a poll among fans; 41 per cent voted for the re-instatement of Stein for the World Cup, 26 per cent opted for the man in possession, Bodo Illgner.

Stein, dismissed from the squad during the Mexico World Cup for disciplinary reasons, has taken advantage to pick a financial quarrel with his club, Eintracht Frankfurt. There he earns £85,000 a year, has received an offer of £100,000 for a new contract, but is holding out for £200,000.

The conflict arose after Eintracht's bid to sign the national team midfield ace Andreas Möller who is thus returning 'home' from Borussia Dortmund. He has rejected an offer from Juventus in favour of a five-year contract with his local club.

Two influential financiers were behind this biggest deal in German football. The transfer fee was set at over £1 million; Möller will earn £200,000-a-year basic and will collect £350,000 more from sponsors. Eintracht, if pressed, could cash in some £4 million from Roma for international striker Bein.

Another well known club making headlines, albeit for negative reasons, were Borussia Mönchengladbach. Soviet signing Igor Belanov, European Footballer of the Year in 1986, has been charged with shop-lifting. His wife, Irina, and friends from Kiev were arrested in a department store.

Belanov's car was found to contain goods worth £700, while their apartment contained further items worth £1,700 for which no receipts could be produced.

Belanov, 29, joined Gladbach from Kiev Dynamo last autumn for £600,000.

In the Bundesliga Bayern Munich took over alone at the summit by beating Waldhof Mannheim 7-0.

Thomas Hässler on form against France.

BULGARIA BY BOB VAUGHAN

CFKA EXODUS ON WAY

CFKA may hold a seven point lead in the league but that was no help in the European Cup for the visit of Marseille.

It proved a disappointing 1-0 defeat for manager Dimiter Penev who had already lost his player namesake and relative to Valencia. Stoitchov will be joining him in Spain in the summer and it is likely that goalkeeper Valvo, defender Dimitrov, midfielder Yantchev and striker Georgiev will also be off and away.

On the night Marseille were able to take charge and open the way to the semi-finals thanks to Thys' 85th-minute winner.

Penev said afterwards that strikers,Kostadinov and Georgiev, had been 'blunt'.

At least CFKA signed up a sponsor during Marseille's visit. Claudio Ghidalia paid up 70,000 US dollars agreed but the Sofia club still have to carry his logo. For the return CFKA supporters could make the journey to the South of France – something new in itself, but costly at around 730 Leva, best part of three months' wages.

Allez Les Bleus – too late!

FRANCE BY ANDRE DUCLOS

BITTER sweet, you might call that 2-1 win over West Germany, mourning the fact that Scotland, not ourselves, will be going to Italy in June.

For this, the French have only themselves to blame. The damage, alas, was well and truly done long before the Great Revival under Michel Platini, with those defeats in Glasgow and Belgrade.

Still, it seems fair to assume that the revitalised French team would put up a better show in Italy than a Scottish side which crashed on its visit to Paris and seems to be struggling to recover earlier form.

Much ink was spilled here over the grim case of Dreossi and Clavelloux. During a match between Cannes and Saint-Etienne, the Cannes full-back, Pierre Dreossi, clattered into the visiting attacker Guy Clavelloux from behind in a vicious tackle, breaking his leg and tearing the ligaments of his ankle. Poor Clavelloux was carried off. All referee Zwirog, did about it was to award a free kick to Saint-Etienne.

The foul, however – assault might be a better word – was seen by millions on television, and the heavens fell in. Poor Clavelloux had in the meantime undergone a three hour operation, with no guarantee of when he could play again; if at all. The Disciplinary Committee took cognizance of the television evidence, criticised the "failure of authority of the referee," and imposed on Dreossi a two-month ban. Which in itself seemed fair enough though Guy Clavelloux, when asked about it, said: "I don't think anything about it. It is not for me to judge."

Clavelloux, however, felt it "a little scandalous" that the referee had not even taken Dreossi's name. "People get yellow cards for much less. I remember seeing Susic get one last season because he took a free kick too quickly." It will take 45 days in plaster before Clavelloux is able to begin physiotherapy. "But I'm going to fight to play football again." Good luck to him.

Believe it or not, but Roger Milla is still scoring goals. Nearly 38 now, and retired from the Cameroon national team – which might yet feel the need of him in the imminent World Cup – he was back in action in the French Cup the other day. The Cup from which he has twice drunk champagne, first with Monaco, then with Bastia.

Promise

This time, he was turning out for Saint Pierre de la Reunion – where he now lives – on the ground of Clermont-Ferrand. He could have stayed in the French First Division, or the Second. Valenciennes were one of the clubs which wanted him. But he kept the promise made, half jokingly, to a friend to finish his career in Reunion, after he had done a training stint there with Montpellier.

Sad years, these, for Aime Jacquet, once the toast of Bordeaux. True, when the Girondins were dominating the championship under his aegis, they were not the best beloved of teams. People didn't much warm to the rather dour and cautious style imposed on them by Jacquet, who scornfully rejected all criticism. But now he has been shown the door at Montpellier, as well.

All the football world knows what it means when directors give a manager a vote of confidence. It was still a little staggering when Louis Nicollin, the volatile president of Montpellier, booted Jacquet out just 48 hours after he had said, following a defeat by Lyon, that Aime Jacquet would stay on as manager of Montpellier.

Jacquet, admitted Nicollin, was not responsible for the transfer policy. And what a turbulent season it has been at Montpellier, when the duo of Eric Cantona and Stefane Paille seemed set to bring goals and glory. Instead, Paille has gone to Bordeaux, where he has to fight for a place. Cantona is still there, and playing splendidly for France. But not for Montpellier.

In charge now is the former French international half back, Michel Mezy, who has helped the club up into the First Division in the past. But it is hard to envy him his task, under so volatile and unpredictable a president.

Philippe Fargeon wishes he could come back to Bordeaux. From Switzerland where, ironically enough, the quick little French international striker made his name. He makes no bones about the fact that he is terribly unhappy in Geneva with Servette.

Fargeon says he used to put it all down to the Servette manager, but now the manager has changed, and things are no better. He would like to come back to France at the end of the season.

Great satisfaction for Georges Peyroche, when his Second Division team Valenciennes beat his old club Paris Saint-Germain in the Cup 1-0, at Lens. Peyroche says he has no desire at all to return to Paris. He points out with pride that he still holds the record as a manager of that difficult Parisian club, "a great consumer of managers." It shows, he says, that in his time there, the team was playing attractive football that people really wanted to watch.

He recalls that he was given the boot in March 1985, five full years ago, when the team were 10th in the League and still in the Cup. "There was a wind of panic." And his successor, he points out, hardly did any better.

France's 3-0 win over Scotland came too late to rescue their World Cup hopes.

Hassam Hassan's goal clinched Cup glory for Al Ahli.

Maleb are first to Arab Cup-winners' Cup

TUNISIA'S Maleb became the first Arab Cup-winners' Cup holders when they defeated Al Kuwait 6-5 in a penalty shoot out. The final's regular time had failed to produce a sing goal.

Adopting an efficient man to man marking system and relying upon counter attacks, Maleb were not the most attractive of the eight teams on view in the ten-day tournament staged in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), but they were certainly the most effective.

They won more games than any other team in the preliminary round and defeated hosts Al Hilal 1-0 in the first semi-final, whereas Al Kuwait overcame Iraq's Al Rasheed through a penalty shoot out to reach the final.

Maleb's midfielder Hashmi Saisi was named Player of the Tournament, but even he did little of note during a drab final.

Al Rasheed of Iraq defeated Al Hilal 3-2 to claim third place.

However, although Pan-Arabic competitions for national selections are now well-established, the relevant associations have yet to be convinced of the Arab Champions' Cup's worth.

Withdrawal

This lethargy was amply illustrated when the would-be representatives of Syria, Jordan and Palestine withdrew from the latest edition's qualifying round group four, leaving just Al Tayaran (Iraq) and Al Ansar (Lebanon).

As group four was only required to produce two teams for the next stage, matches between the pair were superfluous. But they were staged anyway.

Due to the continuing war in Lebanon, both legs of the tie were played in Baghdad, with the home team winning 2-0 and 1-0. A combined attendance of 42,000 saw the games, so obviously the fans value the tournament far more than administrators.

In group two Al Helal and Al Ahly, the champions of Sazudi Arabia and Egypt respectively, had little difficulty in filling the two berths for the finals.

Third place Al Mawarda of Sudan put up some resistance but the fourth team on display, Somalia's Al Matabeh were outclassed – twice losing 9-1 in the round robin competition.

Table toppers

The top teams drew their match 1-1, however Al Helal – playing on home ground – topped the table by virtue of beating the Sudanese 2-0, whereas Al Ahly could only record a 2-1 win over the same opposition.

Al Mawarda gained a 5-2 win over the hapless Somalis to claim the "bronze medals".

Al Ahli incidentally, which claims to be supported by 70 per cent of the Egyptian population, had captured the domestic League and Cup "double" for the eighth time.

Under West German coach Dietrich Weise Al Ahli finished five points clear of their only serious league rivals, Zamalek. The Cup was gained after a 3-0 win over an Al Masri team making their ninth apperance in the final – and suffering their ninth defeat. The Cairo club can boast 23 League successes and 27 Cup Final victories.

Before a crowd of 96,000 at the Nasser International Stadium, Ayman Shawki and Taker Abou Zeid scored in the first half. Top domestic marksman Hassam Hassan put matters beyond doubt two minutes after the interval.

Back in group one of the Arab Champions' Cup Jordan's Al Diffatein benefitting immensely from home advantage, earned the right, along with runners-up Al Rasheed of Iraq, to participate in the competition's next stage.

Cup holders Al Sadd (Qatar), Answar (Lebanon) and Al Ahli (North Yemen) were eliminated.

Al Sadd's demise was not as great a shock as it might initially appear – they had been deprived of the services of five key players by the national team!

Unbeaten

In the Asian Cup, Fanja which is gaining considerable respectability despite the Omani national team's mediocre record easily secured a second round place. They completed the group three qualifying round with a 100 per cent record.

Fanja beat Punjab (Pakistan) 2-0, Kathmandu (Nepal) 5-0, and Salgaoakar (India) 3-1.

A tight defence was the key to Liaoning's success in the second round group B. The Chinese did not concede a single goal in three games, but netted just three times and their somewhat ponderous strikers limit chances of ultimate success.

Al Rasheed were far too cautious in their opening match with Pelita Jaya, representing tournament hosts Indonesia, and only drew 1-1. That proved to be Pelita Jaya's only point during the five-day event.

A 5-0 demolition of Iran's Shahnin followed, but the Iraqi champions then suffered an event of frustration against Liaoning. Despite attacking almost continuously, Al Rasheed could not breach the Chinese defence and the 0-0 draw was sufficient to see Liaoning into the final.

Al Zaourra of Iraq regained some of their country's flagging prestige in winning the inaugural Arab Co-operation Council Challenge Cup staged in Amman.

Initially devised as a tournament to be contested by the champion clubs of all Arab nations, the event attracted just four entrants – and one of those, Al Ahly (Egypty), sent an under 21 selection.

The young Egyptians, it transpired, were an accomplished side and at the end of the round robin competition had the same number of points as Al Zaourra, but an inferior goal difference. Al Faisaly (Jordan) and Al Ahly (South Yemen) finished third and fourth.

A crowd of 60,000 saw Morocco defeat hosts Iraq 3-1 in the final of the Palestine Youth Cup, which involved under 19 selections from 14 Arab nations.

As last year's World Youth Championship suggested, Middle East teams are strong at this level and a high quality of play was evident throughout the tournament's two weeks. Capacity attendances were recorded for each of Iraq's games and figures of over 30,000 commonplace.

Destroyed

Morocco had beaten Iraq 2-1 in the preliminary round and quickly destroyed any hopes the Iraqis had of revenge in the final. Morocco were 3-0 up midway through the second half and conceded a consolation goal only 12 minutes from time.

Despite its title, the First Peace and Friendship Tournament staged in Kuwait was devised primarily to give the host country's national selection outings during the first stage of a rebuilding process necessitated by the old guard's poor World Cup showing.

The new look Kuwaitis fared reasonably well – qualifying comfortably for the semi-finals, where they lost to a last minute Iraqi goal.

In the final, surprise packet Uganda took a 1-0 lead over an experienced Iraqi combination through Steven in the 29th minute and held out until 14 minutes from full time when Ahmed Radhi equalised. Iraq won the penalty shoot out 4-3.

ASIAN NOTEBOOK

BY PAUL MOON

Al Foutoua are cup kings

AL FOUTOUA, making their seventh final appearance in the last 10 years, won the Syrian FA Cup by defeating Al Ittihad 2-0 at Damascus' Al Abbasseyin International Stadium.

The game was effectively ended as a contest in the very first minute when Al Ittihad's international defender Yasser Alsibay was sent off for foul tackle. From that moment, Al Foutoua dominated an inexperienced, demoralised side completely devoid of shape. Amidst countless squandered chances, Hisham Khalaf and Mahmoud Habash netted in the 42nd and 84th minutes.

Al Ittihad then displayed surprising resilience to maintain their challenge for the league title. In the end they had to be content with third place.

Three points covered the first five teams, with Jabala emerging from the pack to snatch the title.

SHOCK FOR AL ARABI

AL Qadsia shattered Al Arabi's dreams of completing a Kuwaiti League-Cup "double" by defeating its arch rivals 2-1 in the Emir's Cup Final.

Just three weeks earlier, the Greens had concluded an unbeaten League campaign; finishing nine points clear of runner up Qazima and conceding just a single goal. Such was their dominance, success in the Cup Final appeared to be a mere formality.

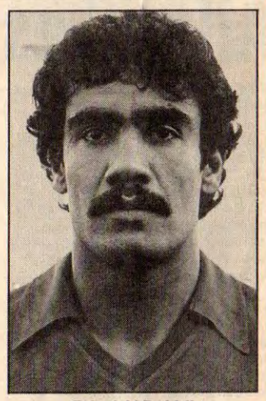
But, on the day, Al Arabi produced far and away their worst performance of the season. Inspired by veteran midfielder Faisal Al Dakhil (a hero of the 1982 World Cup team), Al Qadsia took the game by the throat from the kick off and gained a deserved lead when Mohammed Ibrahim netted in the 15th minute.

Before a startled capacity crowd of 26,865 at Adiliyah City's Kazima Stadium, the Yellows maintained control until the interval, but the second half saw a total transformation as Al Arabi suddenly began to look worthy champions and pushed forward continuously.

Surprised

It surprised nobody when Oussana Hussein equalised after 78 minutes following a goalmouth melee. It surprised everybody, however, when, within 30 seconds, Al Qadsia regained the lead – Salem Mirza darted through a defence still in celebration mood and calmly lobbed advancing goalkeeper Abdul Rida Abbas.

The league champions spent the remaining 12 minutes frantically pressing for another equaliser, but to no avail.



Faisal Al Dakhil.

FANJA SPRING GULF SURPRISE

OMAN'S Fanja created the biggest surprise in the history of Gulf-wide competitions when winning the Gulf Co-operation Championship – the region's champions' cup – in Bahrain.

The Omani league is generally regarded as the Gulf's weakest and each of the other competing teams had far more extensive international experience than the provincial club.

At the end of the scheduled round robin programme, a trio of sides Fanja, Al Arabi of Kuwait and hosts Al Muharraq had similar records of five points and a goal difference of plus two. The Omanis then gained a major advantage when securing a bye in the play offs.

Jaded

Al Muharraq defeated Al Arabi 1-0 and then, 48 hours later, met Fanja in the title decider – their sixth game in fifteen days. Obviously jaded, but spurred on by an enthusiastic crowd, Al Muharraq started what was virtually the Cup Final well, taking the lead through Ahmad Hassan in the 6th minute.

The Omanis slowly began to gain ascendency though and Abdullah Hendan equalised just after the hour.

Another 59 minutes of play produced no further goals and the title had to be decided through the now familiar penalty shoot out, which Fanja won 4-2.

On target again – Ahmed Rahdi.

Golden start for Al Hilal

AL HILAL, King's Cup winners at the end of the 1989 Saudi Arabian domestic campaign, have added the FA Cup – which opened the current season – to their trophy cabinet.

It was not an emphatic success for the Riyadh club. Three of their four victories in the competition were by one goal margins and the other was achieved in a penalty shoot out.

An 11th minute goal by Abdullah Al Hazlad was sufficient to defeat final opponent Al Qadsia.

Earlier Al Hilal thwarted the League and Cup "double" aspirations of Al Nasr when defeating their local (Riyadh) rivals 3-0 in the King's Cup Final.

Al Nasr, which fields an almost all-international line up, went into the final as overwhelming favourites, having clinched the Saudi Arabian first division title a fortnight earlier. But, they were stunned by goals from Hussein Al Habashi and Abdul Al Dkhimy within the first 25 minutes.

The champions attacked for the bulk of the ensuing 65 minutes, but rarely looked capable of breaching a watertight defence and the only additional goal of the game came as the result of an Al Hilal breakaway. Hussein Al Bishi scored midway through the second half.

A goal by Saudi Arabia's Fahd Al Harify, ten minutes into the second half, enabled Asian All Stars to defeat their Africa counterparts 2-1 in an exhibition which proved one of the major attractions of the First Arab Olympic Festival in Cairo.

Egypt's Ayman Shawki had put the Africans ahead in the 16th minute, only for Ahmed Radhi of Iraq to equalise two minutes before the break.

No fewer than 24 substitutes were employed, so it was not surprising that the match became a disjointed affair. However, the majority of a 42,863 strong crowd in the Nasser International Stadium appeared to enjoy the encounter – even though 13 Egyptian players appeared on the losing side.

Super for Faisali

LEAGUE champions Al Faisali defeated Cup winners Al Diffatein to win the Super Cup – Jordan's equivalent of the Charity Shield – before a crowd of 22,536 at the Amman International Stadium.

Al Diffatein opened the scoring after 48 minutes, through Jihad Abou Monem, but Al Khalili equalised four minutes later. Neither the remaining 38 minutes of regular time nor half an hour of extra time produced further goals.

In the penalty shoot out, the League title holders converted four spot kicks – one more than their opponents.

ASIAN NOTEBOOK

BY PAUL MOON

Officials banned after Indian 'fix'

THESE are not happy times for Indian soccer.

As if the national team's appalling record in recent years were not enough, further gloom has been cast over the domestic game by a couple of scandals.

The first involved a rigged match in the All India Airlines Trophy. Leading Calcutta clubs Mohammedan Sporting and Mohun Bagan went into their preliminary round clash both needing to avoid defeat in order to advance to the semi-final stage. Any loser would be pipped for a berth in the last four by the Punjab State Electricity Board.

Rumours of a contrived result were circulating well before kick off and the 2-2 draw surprised few. The All India Football Federation immediately called for an inquiry.

The inquiry decreed that the match had indeed been fixed and handed out lengthy suspensions to the two "opposing" coaches, as well as the referee and one of his linesmen.

Two weeks later, another referee was attacked by players of both teams during and after an Aryans v Mohun Bagan Calcutta League fixture and suffered a severe gash on his head.

Mohun Bagan's Subrata Bhattacharjee was fined the equivalent of £2,000 and suspended for five months. The Aryan goalkeeper, Nihor Deb, received a £400 fine and four other Mohun Bagan players were given smaller penalties.

The severity of the disciplinary committee's actions (severe, that is, by comparisons with punishments given in the past to offending players in India, but still mild by world standards) were doubtless influenced by a three-week long strike of Calcutta referees who demonstrated that they will not tolerate physical attacks from players without an adequate response from the All India Federation.

The A.I.F.F.'s general attitude must still be in question however, for shortly after these incidents president Das Munshi, proclaimed that Mohun Bagan, which had featured in both unsavory events, would be officially recognised as the National Club of India.

East Bengal won the latest battle in the never-ending war between Calcutta's leading clubs when they defeated Mohon Bagan 3-1 to claim India's oldest tournament and believed to be the first knockout competition devised outside the British Isles, the Durand Cup. It was East Bengal's eighth Durand success – compared to Mohon Bagan's 14 wins.

In an attempt to arrest the decline of its national team, which has done little of note since winning the Asian Games title back in 1962, the All India Federation has proposed radical changes to the domestic structure.

Believing that local players currently have too heavy a fixture programme, the AIFF is hoping to impose a maximum number of games and tournaments they can appear in during a season. The number of these has yet to be announced.

An even more controversial proposal is that the national championship – the Santosh Trophy – will henceforth be confined to teams of players under 23 years of age.

These propositions closely followed the latest blow to Indian soccer – the national government's decision to exclude football from its Asian Games preparation fund (thereby acknowledging little chance of success) and can be regarded as merely a knee jerk response.

EUSEBIO, Portugal's 1960's star, was guest of honour at the Nehru Cup.

Diet has often been cited as a major reason for third world countries' inability to challenge the traditional supremacy of Europe and South America. However, according to two Spanish coaches, the average Indian player's eating habits should give him a distinct advantage over footballers elsewhere.

Antonio Campania and Jonus Rojas recently arrived in Calcutta, the hotbed of Indian soccer, and recruited a squad of vegetarians whom, they claim, will be moulded into the 1992 Olympic title winners. It is the belief of Campania and Rojas that vegetarians, contrary to general medical opinion, have greater natural stamina and strength than meat-eaters.

The Spaniards had little difficulty in obtaining 16 volunteers for the training camp they have established. Due to religious requirements, the majority of Indians eat no meat and the 80 per month allowance for those selected is twelve times the average local wage. Squad members have also been promised food, training kit and all other requirements during the camp's one year duration, in which they will learn "newly devised techniques only suitable for vegetarians"!

In the annual Nehru Cup the already impressive cabinet of leading Paraguayan club Olimpia gained additional silverware when Argentina's Gimnasia Esgrima de la Plata were defeated 1-0 in the Final in Calcutta; Luis Mowson scored the only goal.

As in the semi final with local side Mohammadan Sporting a couple of days earlier, Olimpia's defence stood firm against considerable pressure. Then, a penalty goal by Roberto Reta Moso after 20 minutes not only proved the winner but provoked a pitch invasion which held up play for 20 minutes.

Despite their supporters, Sporting gave Indian soccer a badly needed morale boost with a spirited performance and regularly stretched the Olimpia defence.

The latest event in the extensive programme of Indian invitational tournaments has been won by Abahani K.C. of Bangladesh. 35,000 witnessed the Dhaka club defeat holders Salgaokar from Goa 1-0 in the final of the Sait Nacijee Memorial Trophy staged in Kozhikode.

Aslam scored the all-important goal.

BANGLADESH: Mohammadan Sporting retained their stranglehold over Bangladesh domestic soccer when they beat traditional rivals Abahani KC in the Federation Cup Final in Dhaka.

A crowd of 58,783 saw Sporting given their biggest fright on the local front for some time. A penalty by Rumi put Abahani ahead in the 30th minute and it was not until 50 minutes later that Mustakim equalised. He also scored the winner.

The announcement from China that the Guangdong F.A. were willing to allow players to move to the Hong Kong league irrespective of their age appears to have been frowned upon by the China Football Association.

A CFA official said: "We have not had any report from Guangdong concerning the matter. FIFA as well as our association both have regulations preventing transfers of players from one club to another without necessary permission from their respective national associations. Illegal transfers will be punished."

The prospect of making signings from the mainland would have been particulary interesting to the smaller Hong Kong clubs who do not have the finances to bring players from Europe.

Sparta Prague, after winning the Marlboro Cup in Hong Kong, came across the border to play Guangzhou. The match ended 1-1 and the local side won a penalty shoot out.

The China sport press have voted for their ten best Asian sports personalities of the year. The only footballer was Korea's Kim Joo-Sung who came third behind a badminton player and javelin thrower.

Late run is just right for KL

APPROPRIATELY, Kuala Lumpur, pioneers of semi-professional soccer in Malaysia, won the first edition of the Malaysia Cup in which semi-professional players were permitted to participate.

But the capital city side had to endure several traumas before triumphing.

For the first time, the 17 competing teams were divided into two sections – last season's top (9) in Division One and the bottom (8) in Division Two. When the Division One programme had been completed, Kuala Lumpur found themselves second to arch rivals Selangor.

Still, KL qualified for the play-offs, along with the other teams to finish in the top six of Division One and the lower sections' winner and runner up.

In their quarter final first leg, Kuala Lumpur lost 2-1 in Sarawak, which finished four places lower on the league ladder, and only advanced to the penultimate stage when the second leg was abandoned and the men from Borneo refused to accept the FA of Malaysia's arrangements for a replay.

Pahang, which had just eliminated Selangor, also lowered Kuala Lumpur's colours in the first leg of their semi-final and, with just two minutes of the return to be played, was level on aggregate. But, a couple of late goals produced a flattering 4-2 overall win.

Urged on by a 45,000 crowd at their own Merdeka Stadium, KL quickly gained ascendancy over a tentative Kedah in the final and, when Saidin Osman put them two ahead in the 64th minute, all appeared to be over bar some considerable shouting.

But, just two minutes later, Sundram Moorthy pulled one back and the home team endured several anxious moments before the end. Hanyang University, one of two foreign teams invited to participate in the latest edition of the Queen's Cup Thailand's premier club competition won the event with a 3-1 victory over Royal Thai Air Force in the final.

Kim Kwang Su, Lree Dong Kuk and Choi Sung Yoon scored for the victors, while Vichit Sechana gave the 15,000 crowd in Bangkok's National Stadium brief hope of a home town success with a 47th minute equalizer.

HONG KONG: Surprise 1988-89 Hong Kong League champion Happy Valley won the current season's first major tournament by beating South China 2-1 in the Camel Paint Senior Shield Final.

VIETNAM: The previously obscure Dong Thap emerged as winner of the complicated and prolonged Vietnam National Championship by defeating traditional giant Cau Lac Bo Quan Doc, the army club, 1-0 in a robust final.

Goal success for Choi Sung.

NO STORMS FOR THIS TEMPEST

SOUTH China and Lai Sun have both been involved in the transfer market as they prepare for the second half of the Hong Kong season.

South China, more than happy with their forward pair of Dale Tempest and local boy Tim Bredbury, have invested in a defender. Their choice was a giant Australian, Robin Dunn.

Lai Sun's problem was finding a striking partner for John Spencer. After much speculation they settled on Mick Waitt, a former Notts County star, who, having recovered from a bad injury, was playing non-league football with Boston.

When the two sides clashed recently it was South China who came off the better, Tempest and Bredbury sharing the goals in a comfortble 2-0 win. The match left them four points clear at the top of the table with a game in hand. Champions Happy Valley are down in fourth place.

Hong Kong recovered from a home defeat to retain the Interport trophy for the first time in the competition's history with a 2-1 aggregate victory over Guangdong of China. Fielding a team with several new faces Hong Kong looked good in the first half ot the opening game but tired as the match went on. In the 74th minute Guangdon's Gao Yijuan took the ball from a corner and did well to guide it home despite the presence of several defenders.

The return saw a massive 27,000 crowd turn out to support Guangdong, for whom the second leg now seemed a mere formality. Chen Haixian was soon giving the victors problems down the flank but once again the Hong Kong defence stood up well to the pressure and in the 20th minute Bredbury headed home a cross from Cheung Chi-tak. International Wu Gunli threatened the Hong Kong goal on a couple of occasions but on the hour defender Li put the ball past his own keeper for the decisive goal.

Lai Sun newboy Mick Waitt.

JURONG THREAT TO SAFSA COMMAND

THE Singapore league has proved remarkably open in recent years with seven different clubs taking the title during the 1980s. SAFSA, the team of the Singapore army, have been the most consistent side, but then they are guaranteed a steady supply of good players from young men completing their national service.

The team now being tipped to add their name to this honour roll, if not this season then next, is Jurong Town. Founded in 1975 the side have made remarkable progress in recent years. They took third spot in the first division in 1988 and improved to second last year. 1989 also saw them win the two major Singapore cup competitions, and during the close season they were invited to represent Singapore in a four team tournament in Thailand. There they achieved creditable draws with the Laos and Thai national teams.

Certainly Jurong sponsors are more than happy with the club's prospects and Japan Air lines have increased their backing to 150,000 Singapore dollars, most of which will be spent on bringing in foreign players. The Hummel sport firm have also doubled their contribution.

In an attempt to take the league title Jurong have turned to Australia, signing Peter Murphy and goalkeeper Tommy Maras. The two players are both members of the Western Australia state team and much is expected of them this year. Maras has a particularly unenviable task for he must replace David Lee, who for several seasons has been Singapore's undisputed number one goalkeeper.

After being behind so much of the club's success Lee had a spell of bad luck last year. He never recovered his best form following a knee injury and was blamed by many fans for Singapore's defeats in the Malaysian league. At the same time he became involved in a dispute at Jurong, where manager Suppiah accused him of making excessive pay demands.

At one point it looked as if the keeper would retire from the local scene, however an offer from his first club, Tyrwitt, has tempted him back and his opening form has been so impressive that he looks likely to retain his international position for at least another season.

We wait to see if Maras can step into Lee's shoes. However even if their Australian gamble pays off Jurong are well aware that any triumph this year must be based around team work, for on paper their squad does not look as strong as champions Geylang who have three European players on their books. There is also a wish to see Jurlong introduce more young players into their first team as manager Suppiah explained.

"Our main intention is to provide a chance for players like Tamily Maran and Shari to develop their talents.Geylang and Balestier have some big names and this year we do not have many stars but we believe in discipline and commitment. Eventually these qualities will decide the fate of any team."

The defence is particulary experienced. Brothers A.R.J. Mani and A.R.J. Maran form the best fullback partnership in the league and Jeffrey Lazaroo and former Singapore captain Au-yeong are experienced and unruffled in the middle. Zlatko, a player of far more modest ability. Although one deal had fallen through Tarkkio was still anxious to come to Singapore as his contract with Hammarby had expired and he was not due to rejoin HJK Helsinki until April. Therefore he was delighted when Tiong Bahru came along with an offer that would give him four months in the sun to prepare for the Finnish season.

In his first couple of matches he complained about the bumpy pitches that made him reluctant to run at defences, but he still looked head and shoulders above anybody else in the league and hit two goals in his first game. As a result Tiong Bahru have become a good outside title bet.

Local businessman A. Krishnan has purposed bringing private enterprise into the Singapore team. His plan is to pay the salaries of the best Singapore players so that they can represent Singapore in the Malaysian league. He is willing to gamble that the inclusion of players such as Fandi Ahmed, Sundramoorthy, and Devaraji will bring back the crowds, make matches profitable and enable him and other investors to recuperate their loses.

RECENT LEAGUE CHAMPIONS: 1989 Geylang, 1988 Tyrwitt, 1987 Tiong Bahru, 1986 SAFSA, 1985 Police, 1984 Tampines Rovers, 1983 Tion Bahru, 1982 Farrer Park United, 1981 SAFSA.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

BY ERIC WEIL

URUGUAY BIG TWO OUT OF THE CUP

FOR the first time since the Libertadores Cup – the South American Champion Clubs tournament, as it was called at the beginning – was started 30 years ago neither of Uruguay's two big clubs, Penarol and Nacional, will be in it.

Nacional and Penarol finished joint second in last season's first division championship – five points behind Progreso who won the title for the first time while the annual playoff between the top six points winners during the season for the two Libertadores Cup places was tied on points in first place by four clubs – Penarol, Progreso, Defensor Sporting and Bella Vista – with Nacional just a point behind.

They had been somewhat unlucky, their derby clash with Penarol ending 1-1 with Penarol equalizing a minute from the end. A win for Nacional would have put them at the top and eliminated Penarol.

The four-team playoff was won by Defensor Sporting with Progreso, a point behind, taking the second cup place while Penarol was a further point back. This left two small clubs in the Libertadores Cup for the first time. Penarol is the club which has taken part in the Libertadores Cup on most occasions – 26 – and they have won it five times, while Nacional are not far behind with 18 participations and three wins.

Modest

The surprises of the last Uruguayan season were therefore the first division title won by Progreso – a modest club from a poor working class district of Montevideo, Las Tejas – and the pushing out of both Penarol and Nacional from the Libertadores Cup.

But it was also an unusual season for other reasons. The first division championship was played in only one round for various reasons – the South American Championship followed by World Cup qualifying matches and finally the confrontation of Nacional with national team and FA officials which held up the start of the tournament further. Nacional refused to take part in the championship unless these officials went... and finally they had to go, but there was by then not enough time left to play the first division in two rounds, with home and away games as was the custom since the start of professional soccer in 1932.

It was also the first time since the start of professional soccer that neither Penarol (champions 29 times) or Nacional (23 times) have won the title for three years. Defensor (which has now added the name of Sporting) and Danubio won in 1987 and 1988.

The championship was also strange as it was played during one of Uruguay's fiercest election campaigns of recent times. The Progreso club president, Doctor Tabare Vazquez was the candidate for mayor of Montevideo for the "Frente Amplio" party – a combination of leftist parties (Communists, Socialists and Tupamoros, the former Uruguayan underground terrorists) and he finally won the post.

His club, being situated, as mentioned, in a poor working class district of the town, was, in a sense, a symbol of the Left in Montevideo and it sometimes looked as if they were favoured on the field by referees who publicly owned up to being leftists as, for example international referee, Ernesto Filippi and Otello Roberto who controlled the vital game in which Progreso drew with Penarol with what seemed to be an "invented" penalty.

Saul Rivero, a former player with Liverpool (Uruguay), Penarol, Progreso and the Uruguayan national team who also played in Australia, made his debut as coach with Progreso last season. He had been assistant coach to Roberto Fleitas at Nacional when they won the Libertadores Cup in 1988, but they had their differences and Rivero left to join Progreso.

His style is similar to that which Fleitas used with success at Nacional and he got together a team of experienced players with years of soccer behind them – such as Roberto Pua, Gustavo Machain, Pedro Pedrucci, William Gutierrez, Dardo Perez, Luis Berger and Eduardo Acosta – but as they all came on free transfers and own their contracts, technically they will be free agents when these end.

Progreso's winning margin of five points is also unusually large in a one-round tournament consisting of only 12 games of which they won nine, drew two and lost only one with an 18-8 goals record.

Scandal

Towards the end of the championship, and as already mentioned in WORLD SOCCER, Progreso were involved in a doping scandal. Sergio Cid and Alejandro Larrea gave positive tests which, under Uruguayan championship rules, did not mean a loss of points for the club, but only punishment for the players. Cid, who was caught out for the third time, was suspended while Larrea's second test resulted negative...and there were strong rumours of political "arrangements".

As a result of the conditions in which the tournament was played, there was no relegation while Racing Club was promoted so that there will be 14 first division teams next season – a figure which may be maintained.

Danubio, the previous season's champions who had excelled for their attacking soccer with a young team, had in the meantime sold their leading goalscorer, Da Silva, and outstanding goalkeeper, Zeoli.

Apart from that, their enthusiastic youngsters seemed to have lost a bit of that go last season with success apparently having gone to their heads.

Pedro Pedrucci – one of Progreso's championship heroes.

UNAM are Central American champions

UNIVERSIDAD Autonoma de Mexico, better known as UNAM, won the CONCACAF Champion Clubs Trophy for the third time, but it is noteworthy that a Cuban team, Pinar del Rio, reached the final for the first time. The first leg in Cuba was drawn 1-1, but UNAM won 3-1 on home ground to clinch the trophy which they had previously obtained in 1981 and 1982.

In the Mexican first division, UNAM are second in group one which would give them a quarterfinal place when the regular season ends after 11 more games. But they are six points behind Puebla who hold the best record in the league and have prolific Chilean goal-scorers Jorge Aravena and Carlos Boblete starring for them. Guadalajara have moved out of relegation danger since Argentine coach Miguel Angel Lopez has taken charge and they now even have a good chance of clinching one of the top two (quarter-final) places in group four.

Brazilian midfielder Eduardo Dos Santos "Edu" of America tops the scorers table with 16 goals, followed by Chilean Carlos Poblete of Puebla and Argentines Jorge Comas (Veracruz) and Jorge Gabrich (Irapuato) all with 14.

In Costa Rica, Saprissa led Alajuelense by one point at the end of the second round of the three-round championship with the other eight clubs well behind – third-placed Uruguay being eight points from the top.

In El Salvador, Alianza is four points ahead of second-placed Luis Angel Firpo with six games to go.

In Guatemala, a 2-0 defeat for Municipal at the hands of Cominicaciones left them in second place of the six-team final round, a point behind Suchitepequez. This made a playoff for the title necessary between Suchitepequez and Municipal who had won the first (qualifying) stage. Leading scorer in the 10-game final round was Uruguayan Nestor Ferreira of Del Monte with seven goals.

Zico's farewell match drew 95,000 fans to Rio's Maracana stadium – the biggest attendance of the year so far – to see Flamengo draw 2-2 with a World XI.

Zico, 36, played 1,043 official games and scoring 728 goals in his 22 years as a pro during which he played for Brazil in the last three World Cups apart from winning the Libertadores Cup and world club champions with Flamengo in 1981.

The teams were:-

Flamengo: Raul (Carnevale) – Nei Dias (Edu), Leandro (Junior Baiano), Marinho (Fernando), Junior (Uimar), Andrade, Tita (Renato), Adilio (Bujica), Nunes (Ailton), Zico, Lico Zinho.

World XI: Taffarel – Gentile (Tarantini), Edinho, Krel (Pezzey), Breitner (Camacho), Falcao (Gerets), Causio (Madjer), Valdano (Mueller), Kempes, Roberto Dinamita (Bebeto), Rummenigge (Claudio Adao).

Fernando and Leonardo scored for Flamengo and Claudio Adao and Tarantini for the rest.

PROGRESO have been in the top division since 1980 after winning promotion two years running from the third division. Last season they used 17 players in the 12 games:

Leonel Rocco (age 24) played 12; Leonardo Ramos (21) 12; Luis Ramos (22) 3; Julio Maidana (24) 6; Sergio Cid (27) 9; Roberto Pua (26) 5; Gustavo Machain (25) 12; Pedro Pedrucci (29) 12; Victor Silva (23) 12; Prospero Silva (32) 11; Johnny Miqueiro (26) 12; William Gutierrez (27) 12; Alejandro Larrea (26) 2; Dardo Perez (29) 7; Fernando Silva (26) 5; Luis Berger (28) 12; Eduardo Acosta (32) 6.

Leading scorers: Miqueiro 7, Gutierrez 4 (Miqueiros also finished as top league scorer).

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Entrants must state name, address, and telephone number. Entries must be submitted as a slide or as a print, either in colour or black and white, and must be clearly marked with the entrant's name and address. Each entrant may submit as many entries as desired.

Mail entries by *April 30, 1990* to: *MasterCard World Cup Services Offices, Attn: Peter Wroe, Dept. Time–2nd Floor, 104 Marylebone Lane, London W1M 5FU, England.*

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The prizes are as follows: Grand Prize **– a seven-day/six-night trip for two to Italy for the World Cup finals, including round-trip air travel to/from Italy, double occupancy hotel accommodation, World Cup tickets including the final in Rome, and $1,000 in MasterCard Travelers Cheques. (Estimated value excluding air fare, $7,500.)**

Special Awards **– Time·MasterCard will also award 50 Special Prizes, as deemed fit. The prizes will consist of World Cup commemorative items. (Estimated value for each prize, $100.)**

The Grand Prize winner's entry and a number of Special Award winners' entries will also be printed in Time.

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TIME

ITALIA'90

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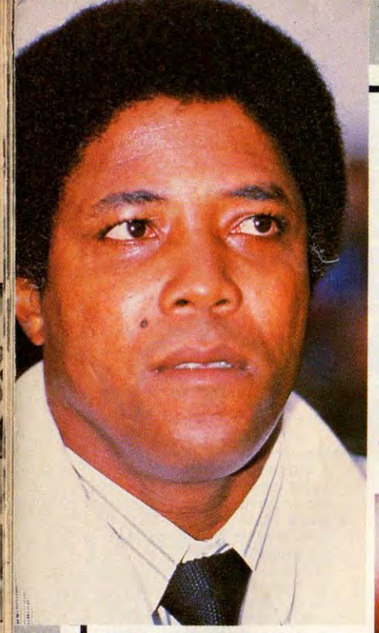
OFFICIAL CARD OF THE 1990 WORLD CUP

Terrorists threaten Colombia's World Cup stars



Colombian coach Francisco Maturana and star 'keeper Rene Higuita are both facing death threats.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

FROM ERIC WEIL

COLOMBIAN soccer officials were just sitting down to iron out problems which would enable them to restart domestic professional soccer – suspended last November during the final round when referee Alvaro Ortega was assassinated, apparently by a group betting on soccer results – when a new wave of murders and threats connected with soccer brought things to a halt.

A group calling itself Cleansers of Colombian Soccer was threatening to kill all members (share holders) of clubs connected with the drug business.

The group, which sent taped messages to radio stations, said it would not allow the league championship to restart while there were people in soccer connected with drugs. It also accepted responsibility for six murders the previous week which included club presidents of Independiente Medellin (Pablo Correa) and Deportivo Pereira (Javier Piedrahita) and two gunmen who failed in their attempt to kill the Millonarios vice-president, German Gomez, who survived after being taken to hospital with bullet wounds and then immediately resigned.

Fixers

The group said that it was composed of people who bet on soccer results and who last season had lost in the region of three million dollars as a result of match-fixing manipulated by drug barons with stakes in soccer clubs.

They further threatened national team coach, Francisco Maturana – in Miami at the time with the national team taking part in the Marlboro Cup tournament – with death unless he left out of the national team players from clubs believed to be connected with drug barons (which would have decimated the squad) and they extended their threats to several squad players including Nacional's Rene Higuita and Leonel Sanchez and the president of their club – one of the accused – Sergio Naranjo.

Maturana thought of resigning and the national team was disbanded, pending talks with government officials, on their return from Miami. A week later the team was assembled again – security measures having been promised by the government – to start training, but in the United States for which destination they left earlier than expected to prepare for another Marlboro Cup tournament in Los Angeles.

During all this rumpus, spokesmen for drug barons sent out a curious communique denying all connections with this "Cleaners..." group and saying that, on the contrary, they had often helped soccer with funds. And club presidents were again sitting down to consider starting this season's league championship towards the end of March if the government is satisfied with action taken and allows them to use the stadiums which belong to the municipalities of towns where the clubs are located.

Two things club presidents had in mind was to limit the number of professionals per club to 20 and to start automatic promotion and relegation for the first time.

CHILE: Colo Colo, the Santiago club with the biggest following in Chile, won the first division title for the 16th time to continue as leading winners, finishing with a three-point margin over Universidad Catolica.

As usual, the second to fifth-placed teams played off for the vice-championship and the right to accompany Colo Colo into this year's Libertadores Cup and this provided some exciting action. Universidad Catolica and Cobresal each won one leg of their tie 3-0, but the former then won 2-0 in extra time after the second leg while Cobreloa beat La Serena 3-1 and then lost the second leg 1-0. Extra time produced no goals and Cobreloa went through to meet Universidad Catolica for the second place by virtue of a better goals record during the season. Universidad took second place by beating Cobreloa 4-1.

Colo Colo had also won the season's preliminary tournament between first and second division clubs.

Meanwhile, Universidad de Chile, another of Chile's big clubs which had slumped, gained promotion to return to the first division and immediately went about strengthening their team, bringing back former international Patricio Yanez who had been playing for Betis in Spain.

ARGENTINA: The second half of the Argentine national championship started following a seven-week mid-summer break and Independiente, the defending champions, continue to lead River Plate by a point at the top of the table. And goals are still scarce.

In five second round games the leaders have scored only five goals and River Plate – now coached by their former captain, Daniel Passarella - have scored six while the overall average per game is only 1.6.

River Plate and Boca Juniors, the traditional rivals of Argentine soccer and leading title winners, played to a 1-1 draw in pouring rain with the goals coming just before (River's Julio Zamora) and just after the break (Boca's Diego Latorre) and the players making the best of the conditions. The result left the two clubs level as they have now officially met 145 times with each winning 51 games and 43 being drawn.

Boca Juniors are still eight points from the top, but with a match in hand...and threatening to move into title contention with a more attack-minded 3-5-2 formula.

Leading scorer is Ariel Cozzoni of Newell's Old Boys with 13 goals.

PERU: Union Huaral, from the town of Huaral 78 kilometres northeast of Lima, won the Peruvian national title for the second time with a 1-0 victory over Sporting Cristal of Lima after each club had won one of the season's championships.

Sporting Cristal had obtained the de-centralized championship earlier in the season while Union Huaral took the regional tournament title in a six-team final round in which they conceded no goals in the first four games and then drew 1-1 in a virtual final last game against Universitario of Lima to stay a point ahead of their rivals.

Curiously, the year before Universitario had drawn with Union Huaral by the same score to stay a point ahead of them in the final game and take the regional title. This time Universitario were weakened by the absence through injury of their leading midfielders, German Leguia and Jose Carranza for the vital game.

Union Huaral and Sporting Cristal were both due to represent Peru in this year's Libertadores Cup.

Union Huaral, known as the "naranjeros" (Orangemen) as they come from an orange growing zone, have been coached by Yugoslav Simo Vilic for the last five months and he has formed a successful team without outstanding players, but a strict European discipline and style. None of their players were picked for the national team in last year's World Cup qualifying games.

They are specially strong in midfield and attack, playing modern and fast soccer. Their midfielder, Jorge Cordero, is now being considered Peru's best player for his excellent distribution and intelligent soccer brain. Also outstanding are goalkeeper Eusebio Farfan and leading scorers Ernesto Aguirre and Domingo Farfan.

It will be Union Huaral's third entry into the Libertadores Cup. In 1975 they did it as champions and two years later as vice-champions, but on neither occasion were they able to get past the first phase. Currently however Union Huaral is considered Peru's strongest team with a good chance to do well.

Sporting Cristal, last year's champions, will be taking part for the 15th time. Coached by Argentines Oscar Lopez and Oscar Caballero, they have in their captain and international defender, Jorge Olaechea, the country's most experienced player and other internationals in goalkeeper Gustavo Gonzalez, defenders Jorge Arteaga and Parcy Olivares and midfielder Francesco Manassero. For the coming up campaign they have just strengthened their team with three leading Argentine second division players, Miguel Galvan, Danial Argueso and Sergio Almada.

Leading national title winners in Peru (since 1926): 17 – Universitario de Deportes; 16 – Alianza Lima; 10 – Sporting Cristal; 6 – Sport Boys; 4 – Deportivo Municipal; 2 – Mariscal Sucre, Atletico Chalaco, Union Huaral; 1 – CS Progreso, Defensor Lima, Melgar FC, Colegio San Agustin.

PARAGUAY: Cerro Porteno, coached by Uruguay's Sergio Markarian and with former international Juan Manuel Battaglia – who played for 10 seasons in Colombia's America, also when they won a string of championships – back home, are the only team with full points after two games of the Paraguayan first division 1990 championship.

This is being played between 12 teams in three rounds with the top eight playing the final round in two groups to produce four semi finalists. This championship will be followed by the "Torneo Republica" with the eight best first division and eight best provincial teams.

Also back home is international midfielder, Julio Cesar Romero after playing in the US, Brazil and Mexico. He signed for Sportivo Luqueno, but contrary to Battaglia, made a modest start. Olimpia, who with Cerro Porteno, represent Paraguay in this year's Libertadores Cup, have rejuvenated their team.

BRAZIL: State championships commenced in Brazil with champions Vasco da Gama topping the Rio league by two points over Flamengo and Mirandinha, on loan from Newcastle United, settling down well at home again with Palmeiras who are a point behind joint leaders Corinthians and Bragantino in one group of the Sao Paulo league while Noroeste tops the other group.

BOLIVIA: Oriente Petrolero of Santa Cruz and Bolivar of La Paz were due to play off for the title of the second stage of the Bolivian championship after each had won the home leg of the final 1-0. The eventual winner will join The Strongest, winner of the first stage, in this year's Libertadores Cup and the two will also play off for the Bolivian championship.

Oriente Petrolero and Bolivar had qualified for the second stage semifinals together with Blooming and The Strongest. The four had taken the top two places of two four-team groups composed of the top eight teams in the first stage of the championship.

Mirandinha is settling in again at Palmeiras.

Daniel Passarella.

DIARY

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

ACTION: Uruguay win the Marlboro Cup in Miami, beating Costa Rica 2-0 in the final. Colombia beat the United States 9-8 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the third-place game ... in the Rothmans tournament in Malta, Norway beat South Korea 3-2 thanks to two goals in the last three minutes.

ENGLAND: Gary Lineker scores a hat-trick as Tottenham beat Norwich 4-0.

FRANCE: Bordeaux and Marseille are both held 1-1 (by Saint-Etienne and Montpellier respectively) as the league resumes after a seven-week break.

GREECE: Olympiakos beat Ionikos 3-0 and continue to share the league leadership with AEK. In Olympiakos' victory, Panayiotis Tsaluhidis becomes the only Greek player to score in five consecutive league games.

HOLLAND: Ajax put on one of their best displays of the season to defeat Twente 4-0. Stefan Pettersson scores twice.

ITALY: Two goals from Van Basten lift Milan to a 3-2 victory over Fiorentina; Maradona scores twice to lift Napoli to a 3-0 win away to Cremonese.

PORTUGAL: Setubal spring a cup shock by beating league champions Benfica 2-1, even though Benfica score first through Vitor Paneira.

SPAIN: Real Madrid lose their 100 per cent home record as they are held 1-1 by Mallorca. But they increase their lead because pursuers Barcelona and Atletico Madrid both lose.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

COLOMBIA: The future, and even World Cup participation, of Colombia's national team becomes uncertain after death threats to manager Maturana and four players (Perea, Higuita, Alvarez and Trellez). The threats purport to come from an anti-drugs terrorist group named LIFUCOL.

ITALY: Giampiero Boniperti announces his resignation after 19 hugely-successful years as president of Juventus.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

AUSTRIA: The provincial government of Upper Austria announces plans to save bankruptcy-threatened Linzer ASK.

BRAZIL: Zico plays his last official match, his own testimonial, which sees a 2-2 draw between Flamengo and a World XI.

SCOTLAND: Aberdeen's Dutch keeper, Theo Snelders, has to undergo a second knee operation – only four days after a seven-match injury absence.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

ACTION: Malta and Norway draw 1-1 in the Rothmans tournament in Malta ... Bayern Munich beat Rumania 2-1 in a fund-raising friendly ... Cameroon beat the Soviet club side, Kuban, 1-0, in a Yaounde friendly ... in an under-21 friendly, Italy beat Greece 1-0.

AUSTRIA: Austria drop veteran sweeper Herbert Weber from the World Cup squad as the culmination of a row which began when Weber was dropped on he eve of the decisive World Cup qualifier against East Germanmy.

EAST GERMANY: Officials of Dynamo Berlin, associated unpopularly with the secret police, say they want to change the club's name. Favourite is "FC Olimpia" – to reflect Berlin's bid for the Olympic Games.

ENGLAND: England skipper Bryan Robson is ruled out for two months after an operation to resolve a groin problem.

FRANCE: Sochaux's Mehmet Bazdarevic, banned from the World Cup for spitting at a referee, plans an appeal direct to FIFAS's executive committee.

ITALY: Azzurri star Gianluca Vialli may need a special support boot made for him after Barcelona specialists discover a congenital problem with his right foot.

SPAIN: Real Madrid and Barcelona are poised to meet in the cup final. In the semi-final first legs, Madrid win 1-0 away to Cadiz and Barcelona win 2-1 at home to Valencia.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

ACTION: Denmark beat the United Arab Emirates 5-0 in a friendly in Dubai. Afterwards departing national manager Sepp Piontek denies he has received a job offer from Saudi Arabia ... Qatar are held 0-0 by Rapud Vienna in Doha.

COLOMBIA: The federation tell FIFA that despite all the death threats and domestic unrest in the drugs war they will be competing at the World Cup finals in Italy.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: World Cup goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko signs, at last, for English second division club West Ham.

FRANCE: Bordeaux veteran Klaus Allofs tells the DFB he will not be available to play in the World Cup finals.

REP IRELAND: The Irish hotel booking in Cagliari is blocked by FIFA and the local organisers for 'security reasons.'

RUMANIA: The federation rescinds a pre-revolution ban on three under-21 defectors playing for the Swedish third division side, Jonkoping. The three, all from Rapid Bucharest, are Alexander Aprodu, Lucian Ilie and Gabriel Ciolponea ... international Stefan Lindqvist will stay with Halmstad until mid-summer before joining his new Swiss club, Xamax Neuchatel.

SOVIET UNION: Sergei Gotsmanov, from Minsk Dynamo, signs for Brighton in the English second division on trial.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA confirm that, if the European ban on English clubhs is lifted this year, England will have three representatives only in the 1990-91 competitions – one in the Champions' Cup, one in the Cup-winners' Cup and one only (the league runners-up NOT the Littlewoods/league cup winners) in the UEFA Cup.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

DENMARK: The national stadium in Copenhagen is to be redeveloped as a 45,000-capacity all-seater ground. It will be ready by the summer of 1992.

OBITUARY

LEV YASHIN, who has died in Moscow aged 60, was one of the towering figures of world football.

It was not merely his height and strength or his enormous hands which made him probably the greatest goalkeeper of all time. At the height of his powers in the 1950s and 1960s his reflexes were astonishing and his phlegmatic sportsmanship was a lesson for team-mate and opponent alike. Yashin played 78 times for the Soviet Union and was the first Soviet player to be voted European Footballer of the Year.

Life was not always kind. After retiring following a great career with Moscow Dynamo illness struck him, even to the extent of requiring the amputation a leg – surely the most devastating blow for a man whose greatest enjoyment had come from his sporting prowess not only at football but also ice hockey. Wherever he went he was feted and admired and he responsed with that huge grin. He was last in London last autumn for a This Is Your Life TV tribute to former England captain Billy Wright. Yashin, who spoke no English, learned a couple of lines of tribute for Wright. At the programme rehearsal he could not get them right. But when it came to the programme's production, in front of a live audience, Yashin rose to the occasion and his appearace – he insisted on making his entrance unaided on crutches – brought the house down. And, of course, the man who made a career of rising to the occasion got his lines just right.

Afterwards I told him of a video production about the greatest players in which he was featured – the only goalkeeper. He said: "Why me? Why not Banks? Or Shilton? Or Zoff?" I told him: "Because we wanted the best." That was Lev Yashin.
KEIR RADNEDGE

EAST GERMANY: The DFV sanctions each club to field up to three foreign players. The first 'foreigner' is a former East German, Jens Koenig of Wismut Aue, who had taken the automatic offer West German citizenship when he sought exile in the west last year.

HOLLAND: The KNVB announce that national manager Thys Libregts, convalescing after a hernia operation, will miss the friendly against Italy. Assistant Nol de Ruiter will run the team in his absence ... Ajax lose 1-0 away to MVV Maastricht in a league match.

ITALY: Marco Van Basten signs on the dotted line to extend his Milan contract by three years at £1.2million-a-year ... Giovanni Trapattoni renews his contract as Inter coach for two further years.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

ACTION: South Korea beat Malta 2-1 in Valletta in the last match of the Rothmans tournament, but Norway take the title ... in Holland, PSV Eindhoven thrash Nijmegen 6-0 with two more goals for Romario ... in Spain Real Madrid extend their top-of-the-table lead to eight points by defeating Cadiz 3-0 thanks to two goals from Martin Vazquez.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

ACTION: Thailand beat Yukong of South Korea 2-0 to reach the final of the King's Cup in Bangkok. In the other semi-final Rotor of the Soviet Union beat Shanghai of China 2-1 ... in Belgium Anderlecht beat Lokeren 7-0 to trim Brugge's lead to one point ... skipper Jean-Pierre scores twice in a 4-1 win over Racing as Marseille keep up the pressure on French league leaders Bordeaux ... Milan beat Napoli 3-0 to pull level at the top of the Italian first division. Supersub Alberigo Evani creates two of the goals ... in Spain further disappointment for Barcelona as they are held 1-1 at home by Mallorca ... in Argentina Independiente stay top despite being losing 3-0 to Chaco For Ever. River Plate pull within one point of the leaders thanks to a 0-0 draw with Argentinos Juniors.

ITALY: Juventus owner Gianni Agnelli hints strongly that Italian World Cup chief Luca di Montezemolo, a favourite protege, will be next president of Juventus following the shock departure of Giampiero Boniperti.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

ACTION: The United Arab Emirates are held 1-1 in Dubai by Finland ... Bahrain lose 2-1 at home to Denmark.

AUSTRIA: OFB officials say every attempt will be made to persuade manager Josef Hickersberger NOT to quit, as he plans, after the World Cup finals.

DENMARK: Departing national boss Sepp Piontek says he hopes the DBU will release him as soon as possible to take over his new role as boss of Turkey.

ENGLAND: West Ham manager Lou Macari is fined £1,000 by the FA for betting against Swindon, whom he then managed, in a 1988 cup-tie against Newcastle. Swindon lose the match 5-0. Macari is also censured. Swindon chairman Brian Hillier is suspended from soccer for six months.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

AUSTRALIA: George Best decides to fly home after a speaking and coaching tour is called off after the organisers claim he failed to attend three functions. Best says: "I've nothing to apologise for. I've fulfilled 99 per cent of my contract."

CHILE: The Chilean federation agrees, in consultation with FIFA, to use an unofficial pre-season tournament as an opportunity for experiments with the laws of the game – such as kick-ins rather then throw-ins, and modified offside and corner kick formulae.

FRANCE: Luis Fernandez, former European championship-winning midfielder, says he would refuse any selection by national manager Michel Platini "because, although I admire him, I also have a grudge against him." ... Cannes defender Pierre Dreossi is to face a federation disciplinary inquiry after his tackle last Friday which left Saint-Etienne's Guy Clavelloux with a leg fracture and ligament damage ... Montpellier sack Aime Jacquet, an year to the unlucky day after his dismissal from Bordeaux.

HOLLAND: Ronald Koeman, Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard are all named in Holland's squad for next week's friendly against Italy.

NORTHERN IRELAND: National manager Billy Bingham is named in FIFA's technical report team for the World Cup finals, along with Sepp Piontek, Henri Michel, Carlos Alberto Parreira, Rene Hussy, Dettmar Cramer, Osvaldo Ramirez (Peru) and Ivan Toplak.

RUMANIA: Rumania withdraw as Balkan Games hosts because of the poor condition of the August 23 stadium.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

ACTION: Egypt and Denmark draw 0-0 in Cairo ... the United Arab Emirates beat Sweden 2-1 in Dubai ... the United States beat Bermua 1-0 in Hamilton, Bermuda ... Thailand beat Rotor of the Soviet Union 2-01 in the final of the King's Cup in Bangkok ... holders Anderlecht lose 1-0 away to Liege in the Belgian cup quarter-final first legs ... Olympiakos thrash Volos 5-0 in a Greek cup quarter-final opener; Panathinaikos beat Heraklis 6-1 ... in the Dutch cup quarter-finals, PSV Eindhoven beat Emmen 4-0 (Kieft two goals) and Ajax win 1-0 away to Fortuna Sittard in a game which sees Fortuna's Maessen and Ajax keeper Menzo sent off ... in the Italian cup semi-final, second legs, Juventus lose 3-2 at Roma but win 4-3 overall while Milan win 3-1 away (and on aggregate) against deadly current rivals Napoli ... in Spain, John Aldridge scores his 15th goal since arriving from Liverpool as Real Sociedad beat Castellon 2-0 away.

FRANCE: Marseille defender Karlheinz Forster will be out for another two or three months after suffering an operation following a hairline fracture of a bone in his foot.

RUMANIA: Helmut Ducadam, Steaua's 1986 European Cup-winning goalkeeper hero, says he may transfer from his second division side, Vagohul, to join Hungarian club Bekescsaba.

SWEDEN: Referees threaten to start the season with a strike in a row over a reduction in match fees.

WEST GERMANY: Eintracht Frankfurt say they have little hope of raising the proposed £2million transfer fee needed to buy Andy Moller from Dortmund and preventing him being sold to Italy at the season's end.

Johan Cruyff.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

ACTION: Real Madrid beat Barcelona 3-2 in an explosive table-topping match which sees Barcelona's Ronald Koeman, Aloisio and coach Johan Cruyff all shown the red card.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

SOVIET UNION: Further unrest is threatened in the soon-to-start Soviet championship as Tbilisi Dynamo, former holders of the European Cup-winners' Cup, are instructed to withdraw from competition by the Georgian federation.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

ACTION: The United Arab Emirates lose 2-0 to Sweden in a second friendly in Dubai ... Andreas Thom, newly-arrived from Dynamo Berlin, makes a goal-scoring debut as Bayer Leverkusen reopen the West Germany season with a 3-1 win over FC Hamburg.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

ACTION: Austrian champions Tirol are held goalless at St Polten so FK Austria (1-0 winners over Austria Salzburg) pull level on points ... Ajax score a 3-2 victory over PSV Eindhoven to step up the pressure on the Dutch leaders. Wouters (two) and Pettersson score the goals ... in Spain, Hugo Sanchez scores two more goals as Real Madrid beat Malaga 2-1.

SCOTLAND: Newspaper reports unveil secret plans for a controversial European Superleague being masterminded by the presidents of Milan, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich. The Superleague would involve four groups. Suggested composition of the groups is. Group A: Juventus, Barcelona, Anderlecht and Spartak Moscow. Group B: Rangers, Real Madrid, Inter, PSV. Group C: Milan, Bayern, Marseille, Liverpool. Group D: Napoli, Hamburg, Benfica, Arsenal. The league would be televised by Milan president Silvio Berlusconi's Canale 5, with a 1992 final at Wembley.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

ACTION: Mighty Barrolle, champions of Liberia, beat Dragons of Benin 3-0 in the African Champions' Cup.

EAST GERMANY: Dynamo Berlin, trying to shake off the shackles of their Stasi-linked secret police past, rename themselves FC Berlin.

ITALY: Inter report midfielder Lothar Matthaus a doubtful starter because of injury for West Germany's midweek friendly against France ... the Italian media suggest that Milan have lined up Rumania's Gheorghe Hagi as potential replacement if Ruud Gullit fails to recover from injury ... Brazil winger Muller extends his contract with Italian second division leaders Torino.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

ACTION: In the Marlboro Cup in Los Angeles, the Soviet Union lose their semi-final 4-2 on a penalty shoot-out to Colombia after a 0-0 draw. In the other semi-final Mexican club Guadalajara beat Costa Rica 3-0.

ITALY: A Naples magistrate begins a fraud inquiry into the awarding of World Cup work development contracts at the San Paolo stadium.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

ACTION: Renewed pressure for Belgium manager Walter Meeuws after a goalless draw against Sweden in Brussels ... no goals, either, for Holland and Italy in Rotterdam ... Spain beat Czechoslovakia 1-0 in Alicante with a goal from Manolo ... Kuwait beat Bahrain 1-0 in Kuwait at the start of the Gulf Cup ... Italy beat Spain 3-1 in a European under-21 quarter-final first leg in Ancona ... French league leaders Bordeaux go down to their fourth defeat of the season and have Jean-Christophe Thouvenel sent off in a 2-0 defeat at Brest ... in Turkey, Besiktas lose 1-0 to Sariyerspor but remain two points ahead of Fenerbahce and four clear of Galatasaray.

HOLLAND: PSV offer Brazilian star Romario a six-year contract extension in the hope of warding off Italian interest before, during and after the World Cup.

ITALY: Dunga (Fiorentina), Perdomo (Genoa) and Schillaci (Juventus) are among 12 players banned for upwards of one game by the Italian federation's disciplinary commission ... Naples police say they have identified members of bank raid gang who stole, among other valuables, the Golden Ball awarded to Diego Maradona as top player at the 1986 World Cup. The culprits are said to be linked with the Camorra, the Naples underworld. The Golden Ball and other items were apparently melted down and sold as ingots ... Italian World Cup organising chief Luca di Montezemolo estimates the profits as running at around £70million.

SOVIET UNION: Italian specialists say Soviet World Cup star Alexei Mikhailichenko is not in urgent immediate need of knee surgery, as had been feared.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

ACTION: Colombia win the Marlboro Cup in Los Angeles, beating Guadalajara 1-0 in the final. In the third place play-off the Soviet Union defeat Costa Rica 2-1 ... in a friendly in Spain, Betis of Seville draw 1-1 with South Korea ... in the Gulf Cup the United Arab Emirates are surprisingly held 1-1 by Oman.

AUSTRALIA: Frank Arok resigns as Australia's national manager.

COSTA RICA: The federation arrange a May 20 friendly against Wales in Cardiff.

UNITED STATES: The Western Soccer League and the (East Coast) American Soccer League agree to merge to form a unified national championship.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

ACTION: In a table-topping clash in West Germany, Bayern Munich hit back to draw 1-1 away to Koln. Ralf Sturm puts Koln ahead four minutes with Ludwig Kogl equalising in the 54th. Bayern are without injured Olaf Thon and illness victim Hans Dorfner.

BELGIUM: Standard Liege's Israeli striker Ronny Rosenthal has transfer talks with Luton.

FRANCE: Christian Perez pulls out of the French squad for the friendly against West Germany because of a thigh injury. Bordeaux's Jean-Philippe Durand steps in as replacement.

ITALY: The Italian authorities accept a £3.5million deal with a West German company which will involved selling off souvenir chunks of the pitch in the Stadio Olimpico in Rome after the World Cup Final.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

ACTION: The United States lose 3-1 to the Soviet Union in the nations' first-ever senior international meeting, in Palo Alto, California. Besonov, Cherenkov and Protasov score the goals ... in Argentina

CONTINUED OVER

No operation for Russia's Alexei Mikhailichenko.

DIARY

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

CONTINUED

Independiente return to winning ways with a 3-1 victory over Newells Old Boys. River Plate beat San Lorenzo 1-0 ... in Portugal Benfica are surprisingly held 1-1 at home by bottom club Nacional in what coach Sven-Goran Eriksson describes as "a very sad performance." Porto push ahead at the top with a 1-0 win over Portimonense. The winner is scored by former Benfica star Rui Aguas ... in Spain Barcelona are held 2-2 at home by Real Sociedad for whom John Aldridge scores both goals ... in West Germany Eintracht Frankfurt renew their title challenge thanks to a 5-0 hammering of Stuttgart. Frankfurt thus pull level on points with Bayern. Andersen and Eckstein each score twice.

FRANCE: Cannes suspend former international midfielder Luis Fernandez after a row with coach Jean Fernandez (no relation) because he ordered a cup of coffee in a restaurant while still at the dinner table instead of waiting until the players had gone into the lounge.

ITALY: The FIGC extends national manager Azeglio Vicini's contract until 1992.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

ACTION: Oman spring another Gulf Cup surprise, this time by holding hosts Kuwait to a 1-1 draw. But Kuwait organising chief Fahd Al-Ahmed threatens to call off the tournament unless behaviour improves. This follows a set-to between rival Kuwait and Oman players which was quelled by police in such a heavy-handed way as to leave one Oman player unconscious ... Brugge stay top in Belgium thanks to a 1-0 win over Charleroi ... Marseille lose a chance to make ground on Bordeaux in France when they are held 2-2 at home by Monaco ... in Greece a last-minute goal from Yannis Samaras brings Panathinaikos a 4-3 win over old rivals Olympiakos – in a game held up for 30 minutes midway through the second half after Olympiakos fans bombard Pana keeper Nikopolidos with missiles ... in Holland Ajax (2-1 winners away to Sparta) move to within one point of PSV (held goalless at Groningen) ... in Italy Marco Van Basten scores twice as Milan win 4-0 away to Roma and go clear at the top. Napoli, without injured Maradona, crash 3-1 to champions Inter ... Real Madrid, in Spain, take their goals tally to 79 in 27 games as they thrash bottom-of-the-table neighbours Rayo Vallecano 5-2. The other Madrid team, Atletico, lose 2-1 to Osasuna but remain second in the table.

BRAZIL: National boss Sebastiao Lazaroni says Brazil are favourites to win the World Cup and must thus beware of overconfidence ... FIFA president Joao Havelange tells the Rio newspaper O Globo that maybe soccer should rewrite its rulebook just to suit the American organisers of the 1994 World Cup and split each game into four sections of 25 minutes each – thus allowing better opportunity for TV advertising!

TURKEY: Amazingly no-one is killed as a section of a stand collapses at a second division game in Kusadasi, 60 miles south of Izmir. But 45 spectators are taken to hospital injured.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

FRANCE: Monaco's ex-England striker Mark Hateley will be out for the rest of the season after tearing ankle ligaments while scoring in Sunday's 2-2 draw against Marseille.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

ACTION: The United Arab Emirates are again a disappointment in the Gulf Cup, this time being held goalless by Qatar ... league leaders Porto are surprisingly beaten 2-0 at home to Tirsense in a fifth-round cup-tie.

EGYPT: Egypt announce that they will not attend the African Nations' Cup finals – which start in Algeria on Friday – out of fear for the safety of their players and officials. Bad feeling between the nations erupted last autumn over incidents before, during and after Egypt's victory over Algeria in the decisive World Cup final qualifiers. Egypt had previously planned to send a B team to Algeria.

GREECE: The public prosecutor's office orders an inquiry into the violence-ridden league game between Olympiakos and Panathinaikos after claims that Olympiakos president Argyris Saliarelis and a fan beat up a TV cameraman trying to film events after a missile from the crowd knocked down the Pana goalkeeper.

ITALY: Now the Italian organisers order the United States to switch their training camp plans because of confusion over who plans to use the Italians' own coaching centre at Coverciano near Florence.

Sacked – Clemente.

SPAIN: Atletico Madrid sack Javier Clemente as coach following the weekend defeat to Osasuna. Assistant coach Joaquin Peiro, a club star of the 1960s, is appointed caretaker until the end of the season. He is the eighth coach appointed in three years by controversial president Jesus Gil.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

ACTION: Egypt and Austria draw 0-0 in Cairo ... France beat West Germany 2-1 in Montpellier ... joint favourites Kuwait and Iraq draw 1-1 in the Gulf Cup ... in Italy Juventus and Milan draw 0-0 in the cup final first leg in which Milan's Dutch star Frank Rijkaard is sent off for a foul on Roberto Tricella ... Real Madrid will face Barcelona in the Spanish cup final. Madrid beat Cadiz 3-0 in their semi-final second leg (4-0 overall) and Barcelona draw 1-1 with Valencia (winning 3-2 overall).

ITALY: Milan's police chief announces that 55 fans are banned from entering Italian soccer stadia until the end of the year as a part of a crackdown on hooliganism.

SOVIET UNION: Tbilisi Dynamo and Guria Lanhkuti are formally acknowledged as having withdrawn from the Soviet championship when the Georgian clubs fail to register their participation by today's midday deadline.

THURSDAY, MARCH 1

BELGIUM: Walter Meeuws is dismissed as manager of Belgium and replaced by veteran Guy Thys – who thought he had retired to make way for Meeuws last summer.

BRAZIL: Brazil's 1986 World Cup star Josimar blames jealous policemen for trouble at a carnival ball on Tuesday night when Josimar was arrested – after a scuffle with officers – for alleged possession of cocaine. Pending an inquiry, Josimar is suspended by his club, Flamengo.

EGYPT: The Egyptian federation is assured by FIFA president Joao Havelange that their World Cup presence is secure whatever action the African confederation may take over their proposed withdrawal from the African Nations' Cup finals.

FRANCE: Rolland Courbis quits as Toulon coach but remains as general manager and appoints former Argentine star Delio Onnis as new team boss.

ITALY: With 100 days to go to the start of the World Cup finals, organising chief Luca di Montezemolo says: "I think we'll make it and have everything ready but, in the Italian style, it will all be done at the last minute."

FRIDAY, MARCH 2

ACTION: Algeria thrash Nigeria 5-1 in Algiers in the opening match of the African Nations' Cup finals – as Egypt decide they will compete, with a B team, after all ... in France, Monaco beat Paris Saint-Germain 2-0.

BRAZIL: National boss Sebastiao Lazaroni is the target for Italian club Fiorentina.

HOLLAND: Vitesse Arnhem obtain a work permit for 23-year-old Valeri Masalitin from TSKA Moscow but fail in an application for team-mate Sergei Krutov. Masalitin was second division top scorer in the Soviet Union last season with 32 goals. Another Soviet arrival is Viktor Sokol, from Minsk Dynamo, on trial with RKC Waalwijk.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA announces that matches in the 1996 European championship must be played only in all-seater venues.

Ruud Gullit is winning his fight against injury.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

ACTION: In the African Nations' Cup, Egypt's B team lose their opening match (which was postponed a day while diplomatic manoeuvres went on) by 3-1 to Ivory Coast ... in the Gulf Cup, the United Arab Emirates draw 2-2 with championship leaders Iraq – whose fury at the expulsion of star Adnan Darjeel by Finland referee Isa Palsi provokes their withdrawal from the tournament! ... in France Bordeaux suffer their worst defeat of the season, 3-0 away to Cannes. Marseille's match with Saint-Etienne is postponed to help their preparations for the Champions' Cup visit to Sofia to play CFKA ... two goals in the last five minutes in Spain bring Real Madrid a 2-1 victory in Sevilla. Sanchez and Butragueno are the rescuers ... Bayern Munich easily beat Waldhof Mannheim 2-0 to stay top in West Germany.

BELGIUM: Holland midfielder Erwin Koeman is another World Cup injury casualty, suffering knee ligament damage while playing for Mechelen in their 2-0 league victory away to Waregem.

FRANCE: Bad news for the United States. Forward Hugo Perez breaks a leg after coming on as a second-half substitute for Red Star of Paris in a second division game at Guegnon.

ITALY: In Rome a construction worker is crushed to death by a crane, the 16th fatal accident on World Cup projects. This provokes a major outcry from the construction trades unions.

SUNDAY, MARCH 4

ACTION: In the Gulf Cup Qatar go top of the table after a 4-2 win over Oman ... Independiente draw 1-1 with Boca in Argentina's match of the day ... in Holland, PSV return to their best with a 9-2 thrashing of Den Haag but they pay a terrible price with two-goal Romario breaking a leg in a tackle with Marco Gentile ... Milan and Napoli both win in Italy and improving Juventus force a goalless draw away to Sampdoria ... in Portugal Porto maintain their three-point lead thanks to a hard-fought 3-2 home win over Sporting ... in Spain new coach Peiro sees Atletico Madrid held 1-1 at home by Oviedo ... in Switzerland Xamax Neuchatel go top thanks to a 4-0 win over Luzern in which Freddy Chassot scores a hat-trick ... in Yugoslavia Dinamo Zagreb lose on a penalty shoot-out away to Zeljeznicar and Red Star move to within one point by defeating Osijek 5-0 away.

MONDAY, MARCH 5

ACTION: In the African Nations' Cup, Egypt's players are bombarded with missiles by Algerian fans after losing 1-0 to Nigeria – a defeat which effectively eliminates them from the finals although they have one more group match to play ... in the Gulf Cup the United Arab Emirates lose 1-0 to Bahrain. So far the UAE have yet to win after three games in which they have scored only one goal. Coach Bernard Blaut says: "I'm sure we'll recover form in time for the World Cup."

COSTA RICA: Bora Milutinovic, manager of Mexico at the 1986 World Cup, takes over as boss of Costa Rica. He succeeds Marvin Rodriguez, who guided Costa Rica to Italy but was dismissed after the disappointing results in the Marlboro Cup series in the United States.

FRANCE: Marseille defender Karlheinz Forster says he wants to stay with Marseille but has been "ignored" since breaking a bone in his foot earlier this year and may now seek a summer transfer.

Bayern's Wohlfarth.

WEST GERMANY: Team chief Franz Beckenbauer names a squad of 25 to attend a three-day World Cup preparatory training camp. Surprise inclusion is Kaiserslautern forward Stefan Kuntz, who is considered a rival to Bayern Munich's Roland Wohlfarth for the last attacking place at the finals.

TUESDAY, MARCH 6

ACTION: In the African finals, Zambia beat Kenya 1-0 to earn a place in the last four. Title-holders Cameroon are dethroned after a 2-0 defeat by Senegal – who are managed by Claude Le Roy, the Frenchman who guided Cameroon to their triumph last time around ... in the Cup-winners' Cup quarter-final first leg, Anderlecht beat Admira 2-0 – the same margin by which Koln beat Antwerp in the UEFA Cup.

ITALY: Ruud Gullit says he may be able to start training in a month's time after one last check-up with his Belgian specialist, Marc Martens. Gullit says: "The doctor was very pleased. In two weeks I can start running and then, if everything's OK in a month, I can get back into full training with Milan."

RUMANIA: Sports Minister Mircea Angelescu cools speculation about a massive exodus of Rumanian footballers after the World Cup. He says: "We will act where necessary to safeguard our own interests. We cannot allow clubs and individuals with ulterior motives to sell off our entire stock of footballers."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

ACTION: In the Gulf Cup hosts Kuwait make sure of carrying off the trophy when, with still one game to play, they beat Qatar 2-0. This will be Kuwait's seventh success in the tournament ... the bulk of the European club quarter-final first leg ties are staged with victories for Marseille, Bayern Munich and Benfica in the Champions' Cup, for Dinamo Bucharest and Sampdoria in the Cup-winners' Cup, and for Juventus, Fiorentina and Werder Bremen in the UEFA Cup ... in the Turkish cup quarter-finals, Feyyaz Ucar scores twice as Besiktas thrash Boluspor 5-0. Fenerhabce, Trabzonspor and Bursaspor are the other semi-finalists.

ARGENTINA: The AFA agree to take Maradona to play two friendly matches in Indonesia in mid-May as part of their World Cup preparations.

BELGIUM: Aad de Mos, Dutch coach of Anderlecht, confirms that he has been informally approached to see if he would consider an appointment as Belgian national manager after the World Cup.

ITALY: Milan's Frank Rijkaard and Lazio's Ruben Sosa are among this week's domestic disqualification list ... Interior Minister Antonio Gava says up to 2,000 known domestic hooligans may be barred from attending stadia as part of the anti-hooligan World Cup crackdown.

WEST GERMANY: National manager-elect Berti Vogts, currently Franz Beckenbauer's assistant, says he sees no prospect of a united German team before 1992 – "since we have been drawn together in the preliminary round for the next European championship."

THURSDAY, MARCH 8

BELGIUM: European Community officials welcome UEFA proposals on harmonisation standards to fit in with freedom-of-movement labour laws. UEFA have suggested each club being able to field three foreign players plus two who have five years' residency. EC commissioner Martin Bangemann still wants further concessions, however.

SOVIET UNION: Lev Yashin, great Soviet goalkeeper of the 1950s and 1960s, is awarded the medal of Hero of Socialist Labour – the first sportsman ever to receive of the nation's most prestigious awards.

YUGOSLAVIA: The Yugoslav government protests to Rumania at their failure to provide proper protection for Partizan fans who were attacked in Bucharest before, during and after Wednesday's Cup-winner' Cup tie against Dinamo.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9

ACTION: In the African Nations' Cup, the final round of the group matches is staged. Algeria beat old rivals Egypt 2-0 to reach the semi-finals and are joined, from Group A, by Nigeria (1-0 v Ivory Coast). Group B semi-finalists are Zambia and Senegal – who play out a goalless draw. Cameroon are eliminated despite a 2-0 win over Kenya ... in the Gulf Cup a final humiliation for the United Arab Emirates is a 6-1 thrashing by overall winners Kuwait – in a match which did not really matter. Mohammed Ibrahim scores four times ... in West Germany Borussia Monchengladbach maintain their revival with a 3-0 victory over Nurnberg.

SATURDAY, MARCH 10

ACTION: The United States beat European opposition at senior level for the first time for a decade thanks to a 2-1 victory over Finland in Tampa.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11

ACTION: In Holland Ajax are held goalless at home by Volendam but PSV win 4-0 away to Sparta. Feyenoord push a little further away from the danger zone thanks to a 1-0 away victory against Willem II ... Juventus beat Milan surprisingly easy 3-0 in Italy but Napoli waste a chance to regain the league leadership as they are held 1-1 at Lecce ... Match of the Season in Portgual, between second-placed Benfica and leaders Porto, ends goalless before 75,000 disappointed fans in Lisbon ... in Rumania, Dinamo Bucharest (still referred to under that title) reach the cup quarter-finals after a 3-1 victory over Politehnia Timisoara ... Real Madrid's latest Spanish league victims (by 3-0) are Real Sociedad.

CAMEROON: Speculation is rife in Yaounde that, after Cameroon's failure at the African Nations' Cup finals, Valeri Nepomniachi will be replaced as national coach by the Frenchman, Claude Leroy, who took Cameroon to the continental title in 1988.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Predictably, Bernad Blaut is replaced as national manager. Third boss in as many months is Carlos Alberto Parreira, returned from Saudi Arabia.

MONDAY, MARCH 12

WEST GERMANY: Team chief Franz Beckenbauer hits out at clubs and players after only ten of a squad of 25 turn up for a pre-World Cup training camp.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13

GREECE: Greek football is rocked by allegations of match-fixing involving referees. A letter is said to have been sent to FIFA by referee Costas Dimitriadis detailing names, matches and money. Clubs involved are said to include Olympiakos, PAOK and AEK. However Dimitriadis, when interviewed, says the letter is a forgery.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

ACTION: In the European under-21 championship three of the quarter-final first leg ties are played. The Soviet Union are held 1-1 by West Germany, Czechoslovakia lose 2-1 at home to Sweden and Yugoslavia beat Bulgaria 2-0 ... holders Anderlecht are beaten in the Belgian cup, losing 3-2 on aggregate to FC Liege after only managing a 2-2 draw in the Parc Astrid ... Jean-Pierre Papin scores both goals as Marseilles win 2-0 away to Sochaux in a French league match and narrow the gap on leaders Bordeaux ... PSV beat Ajax 4-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw in their Dutch cup semi-final. In the final PSV will play Vitesse Arnhem, who beat Willem II by 3-0 ... in the South American Club Cup, Gremio break Vasco da Gama's 18-game unbeaten run when they win their all-Brazilian tie by 2-0 in Porto Alegre.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15

ACTION: Zambia secure third place in the African Nations' Cup by defeating Senegal 1-0 in their play-off ... in an advanced French leage match, leaders Bordeaux are held goalless at home by third-placed Monaco.

BRAZIL: National boss Lazaroni says Josimar has no place in his World Cup squad after further controversy over his lifestyle.

FRANCE: Toulon transfer-list Hungary midfielder Gyorgy Bognar ... Lyon's Irish Republic defender Mick McCarthy agrees on a return to the English first division with struggling Millwall.

HOLLAND: An 18-year-old hooligan, Pascal van de Meer, is sentenced to 10 months in jail for throwing a home-made bomb which injured 15 people at a league match between Ajax and Feyenoord last October. A 19-year-old youth is sentenced to ten months in jail, three of them suspended, for helping make the bomb. Van de Meer was ordered to pay compensation to ten of the victims.

RUMANIA: All profits from the April 3 international against Switzerland will go towards a fund-raising effort on behalf of Rumanian football.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA announce that the draw for the first round of next season's European club competitions will take place on July 11 instead of July 19 to facilitate travel arrangements for officials who will be at the World Cup finals in Italy.

UNITED STATES: The US national team adds World Cup warm-up fixtures against Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Poland to its pre-Italia schedule.

YUGOSLAVIA: The federation and government provide pledges of absolute security for Rumania's Dinamo Bucharest. The Rumanians were refusing to play the Cup-Winners' Cup return against Partizan in Titograd after trouble between rival supporters at the first leg.

World Cup warm-up dates

APRIL
- 3. 4.90 Switzerland v Rumania
- 4. 4.90 Czechoslovakia v Egypt
- 8. 4.90 United States v Iceland
- 11. 4.90 C1-2-3 semi-finals, 1st legs
  - Austria v Hungary (Salzburg or Vienna)
  - Turkey v Denmark
  - Algiers v Sweden (Algiers)
- 25. 4.90 C1-2-3 semi-finals, 2nd legs
  - England v Czechoslovakia
  - Scotland v East Germany
  - Rep Ireland v Sov Union (prov)
  - Rumania v Holland
  - Sweden v Wales (Stockholm)
- 26. 4.90 West Germany v Uruguay (Stuttgart)

MAY
- 3. 5.90 Austria v Argentina (Vienna)
- 5. 5.90 Brazil v Rumania
- 8. 5.90 Switzerland v Argentina (Bern or Zurich)
- 9. 5.90 UEFA Cup Final, 1st leg
- 13. 5.90 Bulgaria v Brazil (Sofia)
- 15. 5.90 England v Denmark
- 16. 5.90 Cup-winners' Cup Final
  - Scotland v Egypt
- 19. 5.90 Scotland v Poland
- 20. 5.90 Rumania v Eguypt
- 22. 5.90 Israel v Argentina (Tel-Aviv)
  - England v Uruguay (Wembley, prov)
- 23. 5.90 UEFA Cup Final, 2nd leg
- 26. 5.90 West Germany v Czechoslovakia (Dusseldorf)
  - Belgium v Rumania (Brussels)
- 27. 5.90 Sweden v Finland (Stockholm)
- 29. 5.90 Israel v Soviet Union (Tel-Aviv)
- 30. 5.90 Champions' Cup Final
  - West Germany v Denmark (Gelsenkirchen)
  - Yugoslavia v Uruguay (Zagreb)
  - Austria v Holland or Portugal (Vienna)

JUNE
- 2. 6.90 Tunisia v England
- 2. 6.90 Belgium v Mexico (Brussels)
- 3. 6.90 Yugoslavia v Holland (prov)

EUROPEAN LEAGUE RESULTS

Week ending February 18

AUSTRIA

FK Austria 1 (Pleva 72), Aus Salzburg 0.
Sturm Graz 0, Admira Wacker 0.
St Polten 0, Tirol 0.
Vienna 0, Rapid 2 (Rodax 3, Fjortoft 70).

BELGIUM

Midweek:
Cup, qtr-fnls, 1st legs: Diest 2, Standard 3; St Truiden 0, Ekeren 3; Racing Genk 0, Lokeren 1; Liege 1, Anderlecht 0.
Weekend:
Beveren 1 (Van Ankeren 25pen), Mechelen 3 (Clijsters 10, Emmers 58, Versavel 79). Att: 5,000.
Lierse 0, Gent 1 (Soudan 45). Att: 5,500.
Brugge 4 (Farina 44, Staelens 74, Ceulemans 80, Booiy 84), Ekeren 0. Att: 10,000.
Lokeren 2 (Stalmans, Samson), Cercle 1 (Weber). Att: 4,000.
Racing 3 (Blair 28, Hasselman 57, Kroha 73), St Truiden 0. Att: 3,500.
Antwerp 4 (Claesens 40, Van Veideghem 62, 74, Czerniatynski 84), Beerschot 0. Att: 12,000.
Waregem 1 (Van Baeckel 77), Standard 1 (Vos 32). Att: 3,500.
FC Liege 3 (Malbasa 44, 60, Ernes 89), Courtrai 1 (Wellens 58). Att: 5,000.
Anderlecht 5 (Kooiman 19, Nilis 57, Degryse 66, 68pen, Van der Linden 79), Charleroi 0. Att: 19,000.

FRANCE

Cup, 1st rnd: Toulouse 0, Ales 1; Monaco 2, Avignon 3; Montpellier 1, Istres 0, Racing 3, Angers 2; Auxerre 1, Red Star 0; Nice 1, Nancy 2; Lyon 0, Nimes 1; Marseille 4, Tours 0; Sochaux 0, Strasbourg 2; Metz 6, Montceau 0; Lille 3, Reims 0; Paris SG 0, Valenciennes 1; Caen 0, Ajaccio 1; Saint-Etienne 2, Angouleme 1; Cannes 1, Perpignan 1 (Cannes on pens); Nantes 2, Cholet 0; Toulon 4, Aix 1; Brest 4, Saintes 2; Mulhouse 2, Amneville 0; Bordeaux 4, Plabennec 0.

GREECE

Midweek:
Cup qtr-fnls, 1st legs: Olympiakos 5, Volos 0; Apollon 1, Larissa 1; Athinaikos 3, OFI 0; Panathiniakos 7, Iraklis 1.
Weekend:
Levadiakos 1, PAOK 1.
Ethnikos 2, Kalamaria 0.
Ionikos 1, Doxa Drama 1.
Larissa 2, Apollon 3.
Volos 0, Panionios 2.
Xanthi 4 (Tzamtzos 13, Uzumidis 25, Samdro 28, Marcelo 46), Olympiakos 1 (Kalogeropulos 64).
Aris 1 (Antoniu 84), Panathinaikos 4 (Alexandridis 36, Vazeha 60, 88, Kalidzakis 69).
Postponed: Panserraikos v OFI, Iraklis v AEK.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Cup qtr-fnls:
PSV Eindhoven 4 (Kieft 9, 78, Volkerink og 47, Romario 50), Emmen 0. Att: 9,200.
Volendam 0, Willem II 1 (De Roode 68). Att: 2,800.
Fortuna Sittard 0, Ajax 1 (Jonk 30). Att: 8,000. *Maessen (Fortuna) and Menzo (Ajax) sent off.
Roda 2 (Van der Vaart 6, 101), Vitesse 2 (Thijssen 40, De Vries 116). Vitesse 4-3 on pens, aet. Att: 7,500.
Weekend:
Ajax 3 (Pettersson 37, Wouters 71, 78), PSV 2 (Vanenburg 30, Vink og 64). Att: 46,000.
Groningen 3 (Eijkelkamp 58, Van der Duin 70, Roossien 74pen), Feyenoord 3 (Kiprich 10, 82, Metgod 56). Att: 9,000.
Roda 2 (Fraser 40, Boere 50), Volendam 1 (Berghuis 66). Att: 5,500.
Den Haag 6 (Van der Laan 1, 49, 72, Otto 30, Grunholz 51, 84), MVV 1 (Vincent 61). Att: 5,500.
Den Bosch 1 (Barendse 79), Fortuna 1 (Clayton 50). Att: 1,500.
NEC 2 (Arts 75, Sanchez Torres 80), RKC 1 (Moniz 60). Att: 2,500.
Haarlem 0, Vitesse 2 (Van Arum 26, Van der Brom 56pen). Att: 1,000.
Willem II 0, Utrecht 0. Att: 5,500.
Postponed: Sparta v Twente.

ITALY

Midweek:
Cup semi-finals, 2nd legs:
Roma 3 (Di Mauro 9, Bonetti og 27, Tempestilli 73), Juventus 2 (Alessio 50, Schillaci 64). Juventus 4-3 on agg.
Napoli 1 (Maradona 79pen), Milan 3 (Massaro 42, 88, Van Basten 77). Milan 3-1 on agg.
Weekend:
Atalanta 1 (Bordin 76), Juventus 2 (Aleinikov 18, Marocchi 58). Att: 20,000.
Bari 0, Inter 0. Att: .
Bologna 2 (Marronaro 57, Geovani 53pen), Ascoli 1 (Casagrande 9). Att: 20,000.
Fiorentina 3 (Nappi 19, Baggio 85pen, 87), Lecce 0. Att: 18,000.
Genoa 0, Udinese 0. Att: .
Verona 1 (Pellegrini 35), Sampdoria 0. Att: 15,000.
Lazio 4 (Pin 36, 47, Amarildo 53, 58), Cesena 0. Att: 20,000.
Milan 2 (Massaro 17, Van Basten 71), Cremonese 1 (Dezotti 84pen). Att: 65,000.
Napoli 3 (Maradona 57pen, 73pen, Careca 66), Roma 1 (Nela 3). Att: 62,000.

PORTUGAL

Nacional 1 (Robertinho 38), Sporting 1 (Cascavel 65).
Porto 4 (Geraldao 36, Demol 50pen, Rui Aguas 55, 89pen), Chaves 1 (Miranda 41).
Beira Mar 0, Benfica 2 (Ricardo 20, Lima 89).
Vit Guimaraes 0, Maritimo 0.
Setubal 1, Braga 0.
Belenenses 1, Feirense 0.
Amadora 2, Tirsense 0.
Penafiel 2, Portimonense 0.
Uniao Funchal 1, Boavista 1.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Mallorca 1 (Vidal 18), Rayo 0. Att: 30,000.
Castellon 0, Real Sociedad 2 (Menchaca 31, Aldridge 89). Att: 15,000.
Oviedo 2 (Carlos 23, Hicks 36), Tenerife 1 (Francis 42). Att: 14,000.
Osasuna 1 (Ciganda 12), Celta 0. Att: 12,000.
Valladolid 0, Logrones 1 (Rosagro 15). Att: 18,000.
Zaragoza 0, At Madrid 2 (Donato 50, Marina 62). *Sirakov (Zaragoza) and Orejuela (At Madrid) sent off.
Bilbao 1 (Mendiguren 24), Gijon 0. Att: 38,000.
Malaga 1 (Paquito 5), Cadiz 0. Att: 16,000.
Sevilla 4 (Polster 18, 84, Conte 40, Herrero 49), Valencia 0. Att: 45,000.
Real Madrid 3 (Michel 25, Butragueno 43, Hugo Sanchez 47pen), Barcelona 2 (Julio Salinas 54, 57). Att: 100,000.
Weekend:
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Bono 84), Barcelona 4 (Beguiristain 16, 34, Salinas 26, Roberto 75). Att: 15,000.
Real Sociedad 2 (Goicoechea 21, Aldridge 77), Mallorca 0. Att: 18,000.
Celta 0, Oviedo 1 (Vinyals 23). Att: 15,000.
Logrones 1 (Setien 64), Osasuna 1 (Urban 90). Att: 17,000.
At Madrid 1 (Baltazar 51), Valladilid 0. Att: 35,000.
Gijon 1 (Manjarin 38), Zaragoza 1 (Pablo 75). Att: 19,500.
Valencia 1 (Quique 14), Bilbao 1 (Loren 36). Att: 30,000.
Cadiz 0, Sevilla 4 (Salguero 4, Polster 9, 34, 74). Att: 20,000.
Tenerife 3 (Tono 30, Quique Estebaranz 57, 74), Castellon 0. Att: 18,000.
Malaga 1 (Alvarez 46), Real Madrid 2 (Hugo Sanchez 24, 42). Att: 28,000.

WEST GERMANY

Cup quarter-finals: Kickers Offenbach 1, MSV Duisburg 1 aet.
Weekend:
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Thom 15, Krec 39pen, Lesniak 62), FC Homburg 0. Att: 12,000.

Week ending February 25

AUSTRIA

Austria Salzburg 2 (Hristic 12, 44pen), Vienna 0. Att: 6,000.
Tirol 5 (Danek 16, 54, Pacult 24, 60, Pelschl 55), FK Austria 2 (Pleva 46, Ogris 83). Att: 12,000.
Admira Wacker 1 (Abfalterer 70), St Polten 1 (Rotter 24). Att: 2,000.
Rapid 2 (Reisinger 24, Pfeiffenberger 62), Sturm Graz 0. Att: 5,000.

BELGIUM

Beerschot 2 (Daerden 33, Goots 37), Racing 1 (Nijs 55). Att: 3,500.
St Truiden 0, Lokeren 1 (Samson 17pen). Att: 7,000.
Charleroi 0, Club Brugge 1 (Farina 3). Att: 18,000.
Mechelen 7 (Rutjes 6, E Koeman 12, 56, B Versavel 50, Bosman 55, 80, Wilmots 85), FC Liege 0. Att: 8,500.
Standard 2 (Vandersmissen 17, Tikva 65), Antwerp 1 (Quaranta 78). Att: 20,000.
Cercle 1 (Musonda og 28), Anderlecht 2 (Oliveira 55, Degryse 63pen). Att: 11,000.
Ekeren 4 (Bartholomeussen 4, Hofmans 34, Prins 37, Snelders 43pen), Lierse 1 (Viscaal 58pen). Att: 4,000.
Gent 2 (Janssens 8, Balenga 68), Beveren 0. Att: 7,000.
Kortrijk 1 (Kruzen 80), Waregem 2 (De Kneef 38, Teppers 43). Att: 5,000.

FRANCE

Midweek:
Brest 2 (Cabanas 17, Ferrer 60), Bordeaux 0. Att: 12,000.
Caen 1 (Divert 50), Auxerre 0. Att: 10,000.
Lille 1 (Sauvaget 30), Nice 1 (Bocande 84). Att: 5,000.
Metz 3 (Benedet 8, Vucicevic 27, Kastendeuch 73pen), Toulouse 0. Att: 7,000.
Monaco 0, Cannes 0. Att: 4,000.
Montpellier 2 (Julio Cesar 48, Ferhaoui 57), Nantes 1 (Ferri 15). Att: 8,000.
Racing 0, Lyon 1 (Bouafia 47). Att: 5,000.
Saint-Etienne 3 (Fournier 48, Gros 50, Tibeuf 60), Mulhouse 0. Att: 7,000.
Toulon 0, Paris SG 3 (Susic 56, Vujovic 70, 72). Att: 8,000.
Postponed: Sochaux v Marseille
Weekend:
Auxerre 3 (Catalano 4, Dutuel 29, Scifo 43pen), Lille 0. Att: 8,000.
Bordeaux 2 (Den Boer 38, Ferreri 54), Toulon 1 (Revelles 15). Att: 9,000.
Cannes 1 (Stopyra 59), Brest 1 (Cabanas 7). Att: 2,500.
Lyon 0, Saint-Etienne 0. Att: 45,000.
Marseille 2 (Francescoli 40, Vercruysse 63), Monaco 2 (Hateley 20, Clement 31). Att: 38,000.
Mulhouse 1 (Priou 43), Sochaux 2 (Laurey 56, 72). Att: 7,000.
Nantes 0, Caen 0. Att: 7,000.
Nice 0, Metz 0. Att: 5,000.
Paris SG 1 (Calderon 90pen), Racing 2 (Bouderbala 57, 86). Att: 15,000.
Toulouse 0, Montpellier 0. Att: 7,000.

GREECE

Panserraikos 0, Levadiakos 0.
PAOK 0, Ethnikos 1.
OFI Crete 1, Ionikos 2.
Kalamaria 1, Larissa 1.
Doxa Drama 3, Volos 0.
Apollon 0, Iraklis 2.
Panionios 2, Xanthi 5.
AEK 1 (Okonski 83), Aris 1 (Dimitriadis 82).
Olympiakos 3 (Detari 49, Tsaluhidis 69, Apostolakis 88), Panathinaikos 4 (Kalitzakis 48, 82, Marangos 61, Samaras 89). Att: 30,000 (Match interrupted for 30 minutes because of crowd problems in the second half).

HOLLAND

Groningen 0, PSV 0. Att: 14,000.
Sparta 1 (Prince Polley 59), Ajax 2 (Jonk 4, Larsson 76). Att: 16,000.
Utrecht 1 (Boogers 66), Den Bosch 1 (Van de Wiel 22). Att: 4,500.

ITALY

Ascoli 1 (Carillo 16), Atalanta 1 (Evair 21). Att: 10,000.
Bari 0, Lecce 1 (Vincze 22). Att: 32,000.
Bologna 1 (Giordano 26), Lazio 1 (Pin 39). Att: 25,000.
Cremonese 1 (Dezotti 52), Verona 1 (Pusceddu 78). Att: 26,000.
Inter 3 (Ferrara og 48, Klinsmann 54, Bianchi 60), Napoli 1 (Careca 7). Att: 65,000.
Juventus 1 (Galia 3), Genoa 1 (Aleinikov og 36). Att: 28,000.
Roma 0, Milan 4 (Evani 34, Van Basten 39, 58, Massaro 89). Att: 24,000.
Sampdoria 3 (Vierchowod 41, Lombardo 68, Vialli 78), Fiorentina 0. Att: 25,000.
Udinese 1 (Sensini 58), Cesena 0. Att: 18,000.

PORTUGAL

Chaves 2, Uniao 1.
Boavista 2, Amadora 0.
Tirsense 1, Belenenses 0.
Feirense 3, Setubal 4.
Braga 1, Guimaraes 3.
Maritimo 1, Beira Mar 0.
Benfica 1 (Ricardo 41), Nacional 1 (Edmilson 86).
Sporting 2, Penafiel 1.
Portimonense 0, Porto 1 (Rui Aguas 69).

SPAIN

Barcelona 2 (Salinas 31, Menchaca og 52), Real Sociedad 2 (Aldridge 55, 73). Att: 15,000.
Real Madrid 5 (Ibarrondo og 8, Schuster 18, Sanchez 64, Losada 76, 89), Rayo 2 (Sabas 24pen, Juanito 87). Att: 75,000.
Mallorca 0, Tenerife 2 (Victor 12, Estebarranz 76). Att: 15,000.
Osasuna 2 (Larrainzar 33, Dominguez 44), At Madrid 1 (Manolo 89). Att: 22,000.
Zaragoza 0, Valencia 1 (Penev 61pen). Att: 35,000.
Bilbao 3 (Uralde 52, Loren 58, Argote 88), Cadiz 1 (Husillos 22). Att: 30,000.
Sevilla 3 (Polster 60pen, 80, Carvajal 82), Malaga 1 (Gonzalez 81). Att: 51,000.
Oviedo 0, Logrones 4 (Setien 14, Alzamendi 52, 73, Rosagro 86). Att: 24,000.
Valladolid 1 (Jankovic 84), Gijon 3 (Narciso 29, 59, Emilio 61). Att: 18,000.
Castellon 1 (Cabrera 52), Celta 0. Att: 9,000.

WEST GERMANY

Postponed: Nurnberg v Borussia Dortmund.
FC Homburg 0, St Pauli 2 (Zander 60, Gronau 89). Att: 8,000.
Koln 1 (Sturm 4), Bayern Munich 1 (Kogl 55). Att: 59,000.
Karlsruhe 2 (Kree 18, Bogdan 80), Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schutterle 68). Att: 22,000.
Waldhof-Mannheim 4 (Freller 16, Franck 20, 33, Muller 30), Kaiserslautern 0. Att: 16,500.
Hamburg 6 (Von Heesen 8, Furtok 31pen, 44, Ballwanz 37, Nando 67, 86), Bayer Uerdingen 0. Att: 14,100.
Eintracht Frankfurt 5 (Andersen 26, 53, Studen 65, Eckstein 66, 76), Stuttgart 1 (Walter 52). Att: 35,000.
Borussia Monchengladbach 4 (Belanov 7, 15, Hochstatter 22, Criens 75), Werder Bremen 0. Att: 25,000.
Bochum 1 (Kempe 80), Fortuna Dusseldorf 2 (Krumpel 43, Baffoe 60pen). Att: 8,000.

Week ending March 4

AUSTRIA

FK Austria 2 (Aigner 59pen, Flogel 73), Admira Wacker 0. Att: 2,200.
Austria Salzburg 2 (Marko 41, Kurbasa 85), Tirol 0. Att: 12,000.
St Polten 2 (E Ogris 42, 71), Rapid 2 (Pfeifenberger 3, Herzog 35). Att: 3,000.
Vienna 0, Sturm Graz 1 (Holzer 16). Att: 400.

BELGIUM

Antwerp 2 (Czerniatynski 63, Claesen 87), Kortrijk 0. Att: 3,500.
Anderlecht 3 (Oliveira 17, Van der Linden 54, Degryse 66), St Truiden 0. Att: 13,000.
Beveren 0, Germinal Ekeren 3 (Snelders 13, Prins 44, Lepermans 63). Att: 4,200.
Lierse 1 (Viscaal 60pen), Club Brugge 5 (Creve 19, Ceulemans 39, Staelens 44, Farina 52, Chistiaens 89). Att: 9,500.
Racing 1 (Asselman 55), Standard 0. Att: 4,000.
Waregem 0, Mechelen 2 (Bosman 15, Wilmots 71). Att: 6,000.
FC Liege 2 (Ikpeba 60, Varga 72), Gent 2 (Janssens 47, Hallaert 80). Att: 4,500.

FRANCE

Monaco 2 (Diaz 32, Mege 78), Paris SG 0. Att: 4,333.
Montpellier 1 (Xuereb 45), Nice 0. Att: 8,000.
Cannes 3 (Durix 9, Stopyra 29, Bellone 89), Bordeaux 0. Att: 8,000.
Sochaux 1 (Morin 62), Nantes 3 (Vercauteren 5, 75, Ferri 72). Att: 3,000.
Brest 2 (Cabanas 9, Salaun 25), Mulhouse 0. Att: 8,000.
Lille 0, Lyon 0. Att: 5,000.
Caen 1 (Divert 52), Metz 0. Att: 8,000.
Toulon 1 (Alfano 57), Auxerre 0. Att: 7,000.
Saint-Etienne v Marseille postponed.

GREECE

Aris 0, Apollon 1.
Heraklis 1, Kalamaria 1.
Iomnikos 2, Panseraikos 0.
Larissa 0, PAOK 1.
Xanthi 2, Doxa 0.
Volos 1, OFI 3.
Olympiakos 1 (Apostolakis 78), AEK 0.
Panathinaikos 4 (K Warzycha 4, Saravakos 13, Kolev 56pen, Antoniou 88), Panionios 1 (Zakkas 50).
Levadiakos 0, Ethnikos 0.

HOLLAND

Haarlem 0, Groningen 1 (Eijkelkamp 89). Att: 1,500.
Vitesse 1 (Hilgers 60), Twente 2 (Schmidt 26, Nielsen 80). Att: 10,000.
MVV Maastricht 1 (Smeets 7), Sparta 2 (Luyten 74, Van den Berg 90). Att: 3,200.
Fortuna Sittard 3 (Duut 17pen, Custers 21, Reijners 84), Willem II 0. Att: 3,700.
RKC 0, Ajax 3 (Vink 33, Van't Schip 62, Wouters 72). Att: 7,500.
Volendam 1 (Steur 90), NEC Nijmegen 0. Att: 3,000.
Utrecht 0, Roda 1 (Van Loen 77). Att: 5,000.
Feyenoord 2 (Keur 43, Brandts 60), Den Bosch 0. Att: 8,907.
PSV 9 (Ellerman 3, 62, Kieft 27, 70, Romario 44, 55, Chovanec 51, Povlsen 77, Nielsen 79), Den Haag 2 (Schellevis 85, Lems 86). Att: 22,500.

ITALY

Midweek:
Cup final, 1st leg: Juventus 0, Milan 0 (Frank Rijkaard sent off, 70min. Att: 53,000. Second leg April 25).
Weekend:
Atalanta 0, Bologna 0. Att: 5,000.
Cesena 2 (Domini 3 Esposito 34), Bari 2 (Losito 38, Esposito 34). Att: 18,000.
Fiorentina 0, Cremonese 0. Att: 15,000.
Lazio 2 (Sosa 11, Pin 49), Inter 1 (Mandorlini 43). Att: 25,000.
Lecce 0, Roma 2 (Gerolin 7, Voller 14). Att: 16,000.
Milan 2 (Stroppa 54, Tassotti 66), Ascoli 1 (Cvetkovic 48). Att: 61,000.
Napoli 2 (Francini 51, Zola 90), Genoa 1 (Paz 86). Att: 50,000.
Verona 2 (Magrin 26pen., Gaudenzi 35), Udinese 0. Att: 14,000.
Sampdoria 0, Juventus 0. Att: 35,000.

PORTUGAL

Midweek:
Cup, fifth round: Porto 0, Tirsense 2 (Eusebio Guimaraes 68, Adulai Embalo 71); Setubal 2 (S Mladenov, Aparicio), Boavista 1; Chaves 0, Belenenses 2; Uniao 0, Farense 0; Vila Real 1, Guimaraes 3; Marco 0, Amadora 1; Valonguense 1, Olivais e Moscavide 0; Valadares 0, Maia 3.
Weekend:
Estrela Amadora 1, Uniao 1.
Vit Setubal 4, Tirsense 2.
Vit Guimaraes 4, Feirense 0.
Beira-Mar 3, Braga 1.
Nacional 0, Maritimo 0.
Penafiel 0, Benfica 4 (Vata 4, Magnusson 45, Valdo 61, Brito 82).
Porto 3 (Demol 12pen, 50pen, Branco 23), Sporting 2 (Marlon 84, Luisinho 86).
Portimonense 0, Chaves 1.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Cup semi-finals, 2nd legs: Real Madrid 3 (Martin Vazquez 30, Losada 31, Hugo Sanchez 53), Cadiz 0 (Madrid 5-1 on agg); Valencia 1 (Fernando Giner 12), Barcelona 1 (Koeman 80) (Barcelona 3-2 on agg). Cup final: Real Madrid v Barcelona on April 5.
Weekend:
Sevilla 1 (Bengoechea 36), Real Madrid 2 (Butragueno 84, Hugo Sanchez 88). Att: 60,000.
Real Sociedad 4 (Larranaga 27, Aldridge 30, 74, H Maradona 41), Rayo 1 (Mentzaca 38). Att: 19,000.
Tenerife 1 (Tono 29pen), Barcelona 4 (Koeman 11pen, Beguiristain 49, Amor 68, Baquero 74). Att: 40,000.
Malaga 0, Bilbao 1 (Estibariz 59). Att: 28,000.
Celta 2 (Lucas 44, 63), Mallorca 2 (Nadal 37, Alvaro 60). Att: 15,000.
Cadiz 1 (Magico Gonzalez 59pen), Zaragoza 1 (Viscaino 76). Att: 7,000.
Logrones 1 (Sarabia 63pen), Castellon 0. Att: 13,000.
Valencia 4 (Penev 43pen, 78, Quique 15, Fernando 85), Valladolid 3 (Jankovic 34, 60pen, 79). Att: 25,000.
At Madrid 1 (Manolo 11), Oviedo 1 (Julia 43). Att: 30,000.
Gijon 0, Osasuna 0. Att: 19,000.

WEST GERMANY

Kaiserslautern 1 (Foda 51), Hamburg 3 (Furtok 28, 78pen, Nando 89). Att: 22,000.
Bayer Leverkusen 0, In 2 (Janssen 4, ssler 33). Att: 27,000.
St Pauli 1 (Knoflicek 81), Karlsruhe 1 (Filipovic 51). Att: 18,100.
Werder Bremen 0, FC Homburg 0. Att: 12,322.
Borussia Dortmund 3 (M Rummenigge 37, Breitzke 41, Lusch 46), Borussia Mg 0. Att: 51,210.
Fortuna sseldorf 0, rnberg 0. Att: 15,000.
Stuttgart 1 (Schler 73), Bochum 0. Att: 12,000.

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS

Bayer Uerdingen 1 (Steffen 62), Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Roth 63). Att: 10,000.
Bayern Munich 2 (Augenthaler 6, Strunz 37), Waldhof-Mannheim 0. Att: 12,000.

Week ending March 11

AUSTRIA

Rapid Vienna 6, FK Austria 3.
Tirol 2, Vienna 0.
Sturm Graz 0, St Polten 0.
Admira 6, Austria Salzburg 1.

BELGIUM

Standard 5 (Molnar 30, Vandermissen 38, Tikva 53, Vos 71, Thans 77), Lokeren 0. Att: 12,000.
Beerschot 1 (Pinter 79pen), Anderlecht 3 (Nilis 8, Degryse 34, Oliveira 52). Att: 7,000.
St.Truiden 1 (Cvetkovic 65), Cercle 0. Att: 6,500.
Charleroi 3 (Vavadio 48, 85, Brogno 60pen), Lierse 1 (Zovko 45). Att: 9,000.
Gent 2 (Veyt 29, Winkels 89), Waregem 2 (Teppers 20, Dimitri M'Buyu 43). Att: 7,000.
Mechelen 0, Antwerp 0. Att: 15,000.
Kortrijk 6 (Ballenghien 23, 75, Versaille 32, Kruzen 45, Desmet 67, Alexandrov 88), Racing 2 (Asselman 35, Krohm og 64). Att: 4,500.
Brugge 2 (Ditzel 73, Booy 82), Beveren 0. Att: 11,000.
Ekeren 0, Liege 0. Att: 5,000.

FRANCE

Cup, 2nd rnd (selected): Nantes 2, Auxerre 1; Montpellier 5, Louhans-Cuiseaux 1; Toulon 0, Valenciennes 0 (5-6 pens); Saint-Etienne 1, Chaumont 0; Lille 2, Nancy 0; Brest 0, Avignon 1; Cannes 2, Ales 0; Mulhouse 1, Strasbourg 1 (5-4 pens); Metz 1, Rennes 1 (4-2 pens); Saint-Lo 0, Bordeaux 8; Ajaccio 1, Marseille 3; Sedan 0, Racing Paris 2.

GREECE

Apollon 0, Olympiakos 1.
Kalamaria 0, Aris 1.
Doxa 0, Panathinaikos 1 (Dimopulos 78).
Ethnikos 2, Larissa 3.
Ionikos 2, Levadiakos 1.
OFI 3, Xanthi 0.
Panionios 0, AEK 1.
Serres 1, Volos 0.
PAOK 2, Iraklis 1.

HOLLAND

Roda 0, Fortuna Sittard 1 (Farrington). Att: 8,100.
Den Bosch 1 (Barendse pen), Haarlem 0. Att: 2,000.
Willem II 0, Feyenoord 1.
NEC Nijmegen 0, Utrecht 0.
Ajax 0, Volendam 0.
Den Haag 1, RKC 1.
Sparta 0, PSV Eindhoven 4.
Twente 3, MVV Maastricht 0.
Groningen 3, Vitesse 1.

ITALY

Ascoli 0, Cesena 0. Att: 8,902.
Atalanta 4 (Caniggia 34, 38, Bresciani 49, Madonna 58pen), Lazio 0. Att: 19,566.
Bologna 1 (Giordano 54), Fiorentina 0. Att: 22,457.
Genoa 0, Bari 0. Att: 25,463.
Inter 0, Verona 0. Att: 46,281.
Juventus 3 (Schillaci 7, Rui Barros 18, 57), Milan 0. Att: 48,112 (Turin league receipts record £575,000).
Lecce 1 (Pasculli 68), Napoli 1 (Carnevale 54). Att: 25,495.
Roma 1 (Conti 34), Sampdoria 1 (Vierchowod 78). Att: 21,870.
Udinese 1 (Branca 35), Cremonese 1 (Marcolin 67). Att: 20,031.

PORTUGAL

Benfica 0, Porto 0. Att: 100,000.
Boavista 1, Setubal 2.
Braga 2, Nacional 0.
Chaves 0, Estrela Amadora 1.
Feirense 1, Beira-Mar 2.
Maritimo 2, Penafiel 1.
Sporting 1 (Marlon 29), Portimonense 0. Att: 30,000.
Tirsense 0, Vitoria Guimaraes 0.

SPAIN

Real Madrid 3 (Martin Vazquez 20, Hugo Sanchez 38, Hierro 56), Real Sociedad 0. Att: 90,000.
Rayo 1 (Rodri 41), Tenerife 0. Att: 9,000.
Barcelona 6 (Roberto 47, 65, 74,Amor 77, Laudrup 86, Salinas 87), Celta 0. Att: 30,000.
Mallorca 3 (Nadal 36, Kudov 75, Guillermo 89), Logrones 1 (Alzamendi 39). Att: 20,000.
Castellon 0, At Madrid 0. Att: 8,000.
Oviedo 1 (Hicks 51), Gijon 0. Att: 45,000.
Osasuna 2 (Urban 22, ^iganda 42pen), Valencia 2 (Quique 60, Fernando 72). Att: 22,000.
Valladolid 1 (Jankovic 30), Cadiz 2 (Poli 29, 73). Att: 15,000.
Zaragoza 3 (Pardeza 75, 89, Higuera 63), Malaga 0. Att: 30,000.
Bilbao 1 (Loren 88), Sevilla 1 (Polster 24pen). Att: 30,000.

WEST GERMANY

Borussia nchengladbach 3 (Klinkert 15, Hochstter 39, Criens 44), rnberg 0. Att: 17,000.
FC Homburg 3 (Dittmer 37, Finke 61, Maciel 75), Borussia Dortmund 3 (Driller 70, 87, Michael Rummenigge 86). Att: 8,000.
In 1 (Gotz 67), St.Pauli 0. Att: 11,000.
Waldhof 1 (Dickgiesser 16), Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Lesniak 36). Att: 10,500.
Hamburg 0, Bayern nchen 3 (Dorfner 6, McInally 70, Bender 71). Att: 32,000.
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Andersen 54pen), Kaiserslautern 1 (Hotic 39). Att: 28,000.
Bochum 2 (Rzehaczek 2, Uwe Wegmann 19), Bayer Uerdingen 1 (Ridder og 44). Att: 9,500.
Karlsruhe 2 (Helmut Hermann 37, Bogdan 55), Werder Bremen 1 (Bratseth 77). Att: 19,000.
Stuttgart 4 (Nils Schler 8, Gaudino 26, Fritz Walter 35, Frontzeck 67), Fortuna Dusseldorf 0. Att: 16,500.

Week ending March 18

AUSTRIA

FK Austria 3, Sturm Graz 0.
Austria Salzburg 1, Rapid Vienna 0.
Tirol 2, Admira Wacker 0.
Vienna 0, St Polten 1.

BELGIUM

Midweek:
Antwerp 2, Gent 2.
Cup qtr-fnls, 2nd legs: Ekeren 6, St Truiden 0 (9-0 agg); Standard 7, Diest 0 (10-2 agg); Lokeren 0, Genk 1 (5-4 pens; 1-1 agg); Anderlecht (holders) 2, Liege 2 (2-3 agg).
Weekend:
Antwerp 2 (Claesen 9, Quaranta 63), Gent 2 (Verdegem 51, Medved 77). Att: 6,200.
Racing Mechelen 0, Mechelen 4 (Sanders 21, Bruno Versavel 48, Emmers 55, Patrick Versavel 70)
Beveren 0, Lierse 0.
Anderlecht 1 (Degryse 56), Standard Liege 0.
St Truiden 0, Charleroi 0.
FC Liege 0, Club Brugge 0.
Cercle 0, Beerschot 2.
Waregem 1, Ekeren 1.
Lokeren 0, Kortrijk 1.

FRANCE

Midweek:
Lyon 0, Nantes 0. Att: 25,446.
Sochaux 0, Marseille 2 (Papin 48pen, 77). Att: 11,000.
Bordeaux 0, Monaco 0. Att: 16,000.
Weekend:
Auxerre 2 (Scifo 12, 87pen), Saint-Etienne 1 (Mendy 65). Att: 7,500.
Marseille 3 (Papin 17, 82, 89), Toulon 0. Att: 33,000.
Lyon 4 (Kabongo 24, 78, Bouafia 44, Colin 59), Brest 0. Att: 15,000.
Nantes 1 (Kombouare 89), Lille 0. Att: 12,000.
Toulouse 0, Sochaux 0. Att: 7,000.
Mulhouse 0, Caen 0. Att: 7,000.
Nice 2 (Mazzuchetti 7, Langers 31), Racing Paris 0. Att: 5,000.

GREECE

Midweek:
Iraklis 3, AEK 1.
Panseraikos 0, OFI 0.
Weekend:
Levadiakos 0, Larissa 0.
Volos 2, Ionikos 1.
Heraklis 3, Ethnikos 0.
Xanthi 2, Panseraikos 0.
Aris 1, PAOK 0.
Panathinaikos 3 (Kolev 14, K Warzycha 25, Antoniou 57), OFI Crete 1 (Andreanidis 89).
Olympiakos 1 (Tsaluhidis 80), Kalamaria 0.
AEK 1, Doxa 0.
Panionios 1, Apollon 1.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Cup, semi-finals: PSV 2, Ajax 2 (4-2 pens); Vitesse 3, Willem II 0.
League:
Sparta 3, Twente 0.
Weekend:
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Valckx 90), Twente Enschede 1 (Gaasbeek 6). Att: 24,700.
Haarlem 0, Willem II 2 (Feskens 17, Van der Borgt 70). Att: 1,000.
Fortuna Sittard 1 (Clayton), NEC Nijmegen 1 (Lok). Att: 4,000.
Utrecht 0, Ajax 0. Att: 12,700.
Feyenoord 2 (Scholten 27, Brochard 61), Roda 2 (Hofman 13, Van Loen 38). Att: 13,000.
Groningen 0, Den Bosch 0. Att: 8,901.
Vitesse 2 (Van Arum 72, Eijer 90), MVV Maastricht 1 (Lanckohr 12). Att: 7,500.
RKC 3 (Hoekstra 7, De Wijs 24, Moniz 70), Sparta 0. Att: .
Volendam 0, Den Haag 2 (Lems 10, Danen 86). Att: 5,000.

ITALY

Ascoli 2 (Cvetkovic 9, Giovanelli 84), Fiorentina 1 (Baggio 14). Att: 8,000.
Bari 4 (Maiellaro 1, 66, Monelli 74, 80), Atalanta 1 (Bordon og 84). Att: 34,000.
Cesena 1 (Agostini 3), Genoa 1 (Fiorin 41). Att: 20,000.
Cremonese 1 (Neffa 22), Lecce 1 (Pasculli 26,000). Att: .
Juventus 1 (Zavarov 11), Udinese 1 (Branca 9). Att: 25,000.
Lazio 0, Roma 1 (Voller 30). Att: 26,000.
Milan 1 (Costacurta 84), Inter 3 (Serena 3, 89, Matthaus 23). Att: 62,000.
Sampdoria 2 (Dossena 38, Lombardo 67), Napoli 1 (Careca 51). Att: 32,000.
Verona 3 (Gritti 39, 77, Pellegrini 46).

PORTUGAL

Portimonense 2 (Luciano 2, Getov 44), Benfica 3 (Magnusson 24, 38, Valdo 82).
Setubal 0, Uniao 0.
Porto 4 (Couto 2, Andre 10, Aguas 68, Banderirinha 89), Maritimo 1 (Lambie 9). Att: 45,000.
Guimaraes 0, Boavista 1.
Gijon 1, Chaves 1.
Penfiel 1, Braga 0.
Beira-Mar 1, Tirsense 0.
Nacional 3, Feirense 0.

SPAIN

Malaga 0, Valladolid 1.
Bilbao 1 (Mendiguren 70), Real Madrid 1 (Hugo Sanchez 14). Att: 45,000.
At Madrid 2 (Baltazar 29, Manolo 74), Mallorca 0.
Gijon 0, Castellon 0.
Valencia 3 (Penev 56pen, Fenoll 80, Toni 88), Oviedo 0.
Cadiz 0, Osasuna 0.
Sevilla 4 (Rafa Paz 19, Polster 23 pen, 84, Carvajal 60), Zaragoza 0.
Tenerife 2 (Rommel 90, Felipe 93), Real Sociedad 2 (Goicoechea 57, Menchaca 88pen).
Logrones 1 (Sarabia 50), Barcelona 2 (Alexanco 55, Beguiristain 62). Att: 13,000.
Celta 0, Rayo Vallecano 0.

WEST GERMANY

Cup qtr-fnl replay: MSV Duisburg 0, Kickers Offenbach 1 (Haub 27). Att: 22,000.
League:
St Pauli 2 (Zander 71, 75), Waldhof Mannheim 1 (Guttler 59). Att: 13,700.
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Thon 65), Hamburg 0. Att: 11,800.
Werder Bremen 4 (Riedle 25, 73, Votava 30, Neubarth 37), Koln 0. Att: 25,760.
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Zorc 25, M Rummenigge 55), Karlsruhe 0. Att: 31,100.
Nurnberg 2

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

CHAMPIONS' CUP

Quarter-finals, first legs (March 7)
Bayern Munich 2 (Wohlfarth 74, Grahammer 80)
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Povlsen 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Van Langenhove (Bel)

Bayern: Aumann – Augenthaler, Kohler, Pflugler, Dorfner, Reuter, Strunz, Kogl (Bender 69), Wohlfarth, McInally.

PSV: Van Breukelen – Gerets, Nielsen, Valckx, Heintze – Vanenburg, Van Aerle, Chovanec, Lerby – Povlsen (Ellerman 89), Kieft.

Bayern and PSV both began this match with a string of injuries causing selection problems. The tie was full of resolute tackling in midfield but not too many goal chances. Bayern made their first opening in the 23rd minute when Pflugler broke through but saw his drive tipped for a corner by Van Breukelen. One minute later Grahammer was narrowly off target. In the 32nd minute Lerby, formerly with Bayern, shot wide. Then Chovanec was just over the top with a free kick. Bayern's efforts did not pay off until the 74th minute. Then McInally escaped a tackle on the right and centred for Roland Wohlfarth to score. Three minutes later PSV equalised with a Flemming Povlsen header. Three more minutes and Bayern regained the lead thanks to Grahammer's effort from a free kick.

Benfica 1 (Magnusson 9pen)
Dnepr 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Quiniou (Fr)

Benfica: Silvino – Jose Carlos, Samuel, Ricardo, Veloso – Thern, Pacheco (Cesar Brito 63), Valdo, Vitor Paneira (Abel 86) – Vata Garcia, Magnusson.

Dnepr: Gorodov – Yudin, Gerashenko, Sudelnikov, Ledyakhov, Kudritski, Bagmut, Benko, Son, Zhidkov (Kulish 86), Chernovy.

Benfica's brilliant all-action first half deserved a better reward than a single penalty goal scored by Magnusson after Vitor Paneira was brought down in the ninth minute by Sidelnikov. Magnusson, Vata Garcia and Paneira all had other efforts punched away by the erratic Dnepr skipper and keeper, Gorodov. In the second half Dnepr made a more positive contribution, forcing their way forward and creating several half-chances. Gorodov, who punched more often than Mike Tyson, was also yellow carded for dissent after a team-mate was injured. Dnepr coach Yevgeny Kucherevsky, asked about Gorodov, said: "That was the worst display I've ever seen from him."

CFKA Sredets 0
Marseille 1 (Thys 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 58,000. **Ref:** Schmidhuber (WG)

CFKA: Valov – E Dimitrov, T Ivanov, Urukov (Bachev 35), D Mladenov, Yanchev, Kostadinov, Stoichkov, Georgiev, Bakalov, Kirov.

Marseille: Huard – Amoros, Di Meco, Mura, Mozer (Thys 73), Germain, Deschamps, Tigana, Papin, Vercruysse, Waddle (Francescoli 72).

A late goal from substitute Philippe Thys brought Marseille a vital away goal and victory. Marseille packed their team with midfielders, leaving Uruguayan forward Enzo Francescoli – who had squabbled with coach Gerard Gili earlier in the week – on the subs' bench. Marseille came closest to opening the scoring through Papin from a free kick after 25 minutes. Two minutes later it took a sharp save from Valov to foil the Marseille captain. CFKA made little impression on Marseille. Kirov was narrowly wide with one header to a Stoichkov cross then Stoichkov went close with a free kick after he had been fouled. With five minutes remaining Vercruysse and Papin provided Thys with the opportunity to steer a close-range shot past Valov for the winner.

Mechelen 0
Milan 0
Att: 33,000. **Ref:** Courtney (Eng)

Mechelen: Preud'homme – Sanders, Clijsters, Rutjes, Deferm, Albert, Emmers, Versavel, De Wilde, Bosman, Wilmots.

Milan: Galli – Costacurta, Maldini, Colombo (Salvatori 74), Rijkaard, Baresi, Stroppa, Ancelotti, Evani, Van Basten, Massaro.

This was an emotional match, the first European club game in the Heysel stadium since the 1985 disaster – and involving an Italian club and an Englishman as referee. Milan appeared more weighed down by the pressures of the occasion than Mechelen. The Belgians did everything but score. Bruno Versavel hit a post after 18 minutes, Rutjes – who also shadowed Van Basten effectively – had a headed goal disallowed for offside, as did John Bosman. Galli made two fine saves in the second half from Wilmots. Milan produced an attacking threat only in the last few minutes but Maldini's shot lacked power and Rijkaard slightly mistimed a header.

CUP-WINNERS' CUP

Quarter-finals, first legs (March 7 unless stated)
Dinamo Bucharest 2 (Florin Raducioiu 18 and 58)
Partizan Belgrade 1 (Predrag Spasic 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref: Krchnak (Cz)**

Dinamo: Stelea – Mihaescu, Klein, Rednic, Timofte, Andone, Vaiscovici (Lupescu 53), Sabau, Raducioiu (Zamfir 87), Mateut, Lupu.

Partizan: Omerovic – Stanojkovic (Misa Bajovic 72), Djurdjevic, Spasic, Petric, Vujacic, Mijatovic, Djurovski, Scepovic (Pantic 81), Djordjevic, Bogdanovic.

Partizan left Bucharest happy to have sneaked an away goal which they expected to hold them in good stead for the return in Titograd. However they also left with some ill feeling in their wake after crowd trouble involving their infamous 'fans.' Dinamo, who appear to have delayed their name change back to Unirea Tricolor, began brightly. They took the lead after 18 minutes when Lupu broke through on the right and Raducioiu scored from close range. The same player was close to a second goal in the 35th minute. Partizan first threatened with a Spasic free kick, well saved by Stelea, in the 46th minute. Raducioiu then extended Dinamo's lead after a solo run in the 58th minute. Much of that good work was spoiled, however, when a defensive mix-up allowed Spasic the chance to pull one back for Partizan. After the match Dinamo coach Mircea Lucescu said he would complain to UEFA about the Yugoslav fans, who were at one stage beaten back to police. In due course the Yugoslav government formally protested to Rumania about the lack of crowd control after the game when the Slav fans' buses were attacked by missile-throwing hooligans.

Sampdoria 2 (Pietro Vierchowod 12, Urs Meier og 84)
Grasshoppers 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref: Mikkelsen (Fin)**

Sampdoria: Pagliuca – Mannini, Carboni, Pari, Vierchowod, Invernizzi, Lombardo,Katanec, Vialli (Dossena 79), Mancini, Salsano.

Grasshoppers: M Brunner – Meier, In-Albon, Egli, Koller, Andermatt, Green, Sutter (De Vincente 89), Strudal, Bickel, Nemtsoudis (Khor 63).

Gianluca Vialli, who had returned earlier than expected after a foot injury, inspired the Italians' victory despite being on the receiving end of some some tackling which saw Sampdoria awarded 32 free kicks. Roberto Mancini was equally influential in victory. He provided the cross from which Vierchowod scored Sampdoria's opener and his cross-shot also provoked the spectacular own goal from Urs Meier which sealed the Italians' success.

Valladolid 0
Monaco 0
Att: 17,000. **Ref:** D'Elia (It)

Valladolid: Ravnic – Ayarza (Fano 60), Lemos, Moreno, Gonzalo, Manolo, Moya, Caminero, Pena, Minguela (Fonseca 60), Jankovic. Monaco: Ettori – Valery, Puel, Petit, Mendy, Guerit, Ferratge, Dib, Weah (Weah 82), Mege (Toure 78), Clement.

Valladolid entered this game more concerned about their relegation struggle while Monaco were without half their best team because of injuries or suspension. The result was a drab match with no scoring chances and little imagination. Valladolid's main attacking ploy was to thrust big defender Gonzalo forward at set pieces, while Monaco – who could have won with a little more application – did not seem to realise the fact until after half-time.

Anderlecht 2 (Degryse 32 and 38)
Admira Wacker 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Peschel (Aus). Played March 6.

Anderlecht: De Wilde – Grun, Keshi, Van Tiggelen, Andersen – Musonda, Jankovic (Vervoort 76), Kooiman – Degryse, Vanderlinden (Oliveira 78), Nilis.

Admira: Wolfgang Knaller – Oberhofer, Bacher, Sperr, Graf (Dotzl 64), Artner, Gretschnig, Muller, Abfalterer, Schaub (Walter Knaller 75), Rodax.

The sluggish Austrians were no match for Anderlecht's speed and skill despite some stout defensive work by West German Uwe Muller. Anderlecht went ahead after 32 minutes when Jankovic found Degryse and his shot was deflected past Knaller by Bacher. Degryse outpaced Bacher to score his second and was then denied a hat-trick only when a shot ricocheted off the bar.

UEFA CUP

Quarter-finals, first legs (March 7 unless stated)
Koln 2 (Pierre Littbarski 2, Anders Giske 53)
Antwerp 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Midgley (Eng). Played March 6.

Koln: Illgner – Gielchen, Higl, Giske, Hassler, Janssen (Jensen 77), Greiner, Littbarski, Gortz, Sturm (Gotz 73), Rudy.

Antwerp: Svilar – Emmerechts, Kiekens, Curcic, Smits, Geilenkirchen, Schrooten, Van Rooij, Lehnhoff, Van Veirdeghem, Claesen (Czerniatynski 66).

It took Koln one minute ten seconds to take the lead when Pierre Littbarski converted an Olaf Janssen cross. Both goalkeepers were forced into action in a high-pace game which saw the greatest threat to Koln coming from their 'old boys' Lehnhoff and Geilenkirchen. Littnbarski hit a post from a Hassler pass in the 36th minute and it was not until early in the second half that the Germans increased their lead. Littbarski crossed the left, Jansson flicked the ball on and Giske headed home from close range.

Fiorentina 1 (Giuseppe Volpecina 7)
Auxerre 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Fredriksson (Swe). Played in Perugia.

Fiorentina: Landucci – Volpecina, Dell'Oglio, Iachini, Pioli, battistini, Nappi, Dunga, Buso, Baggio, Kubik.

Auxerre: Martini – Catalano, Darras, Boli, Barret, Matysik, Mazzolini, Guerreiro, Kovacs (Dutuel 81), Scifo, Cocard.

Fiorentina made an an ideal start then failed to press home their advantage. After seven minutes Auxerre failed to clear a Nappi cornerand defender Volpecina headed home. Roberto Baggio was closely marked by Darras for most of the match but on the one occasion he did escape his marker the Italian international shot straight at Martini when unmarked in front of goal. The match was played in Perugia because of World Cup work in Florence.

FC Liege 1 (Zvonko Varga 40)
Werder Bremen 4 (Manfred Bockenfeld 32, Karl-H Riedle 35, 68, Wynton Rufer 39)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Gifford (Wal)

Liege: Munaron – Boffin, De Sart, Habrant, Houben, Malbasa (Ikpeba 82), Ernes (Nijskens 56), Varga, Waseige, Wegria, Milosevic.

Werder: Reck – Sauer, Otten, Bratseth, Borowka, Bockenfeld, Eilts, Neubarth, Harttgen, Votava, Rufer, Riedle.

Werder, who had previously eliminated UEFA Cup-holders Napoli, were far too strong for the Belgians. Liege twice went close in the first half through Danny Boffin. But for the rest of the time Werder were in charge. Despite the absence of midfiedler Gunter Hermann, Werder sealed the match – and probably the tie – with a spell of three goals in eight minutes in the first half through Bockenfeld, Riedle and Rufer. Riedle scored his second goal after 71 minutes and was denied a hat-trick only by the fact that a first-half header rebounded off a post. Varga scored Liege's consolation.

Hamburg 0
Juventus 2 (Salvatore Schillaci 50, Pier-Luigi Casiraghi 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,900. **Ref:** Karlsson (Swe)

Hamburg: Golz – Schroder, Kober, Beiersdorfer (Ballwanz 60), Moser (Marin 74), Sport, Jusufi, Von Heesen, Eck, Merkle, Furtok.

Juventus: Tacconi – Bonetti, Galia, Brio, Bruno, De Agostini, Aleinikov (Serena 83), Rui Barros (Alessio 72), Marocchi, Casiraghi, Schillaci.

Juventus struck twice in seven minutes to run up an excellent victory – some sort of belated revenge for coach Dino Zoff, who was in the Juventus team beaten by Hamburg in the 1983 Champions' Cup final. Juventus controlled most of the match despite the absences of sweeper Tricella and schemer Zavarov and went ahead in the 50th minute. Beiersdorfer failed to clear a cross, Casiraghi headed across the box and Schillaci headed home. Seven minutes later Beiersdorfer was again at fault as unmarked Casiraghi headed a Marocchi cross beyond Golz.

Monday, February 5

Feb 5 = Valletta – Malta tournament
Norway 3 (O Berg 53, Skammelsrud 85, Tangen 89)
South Korea 2 (Hwang Seon-hong 36, Lee Sang-yoon 57)
HT: 0-1. **Att.** 1,500. **Ref:** Agius (Mal)

Norway: By Rise – H Hansen, J H Halvoren, Tangen, Halle, Loken, Bohinen, O Berg, J I Jakobsen (Skammelsrud 23), Jorn Andersen, Fjortoft.

S Korea: Kim Pong-joo – Choi Kang-hee (Lee Young-ik 20), Chung Yong-hwan, Hong Kyung-bo, Gu Sang-bum, Noh Soo-jin (Hwang Bo-kwan 26), Yoon Deuk-yeo, Lee-Sang-yoon, Kim Joo-sung, Choi Soon-ho, Hwang Seon-hong (Byun Byung-joo 23).

Weds, February 7

Feb 7 = Valletta – Malta tournament
Malta 1 (Raymond Vella 38)
Norway 1 (Fjortoft 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Edgar Azzopardi (Mal)

Malta: Cini – Ed Camilleri, R Vella, Galea, Falzon (Laferla 23), C Scerri, Gregory, Degiorgio, Darabott, Zarb, Suda.

Norway: Thorstvedt – Halle, Johnsen, Tangen, Bjornebye, Loken, J Berg (O Berg 23), Bohinen, Skammelsrud, Sorloth (Jorn Andersen 46), Fjortoft.

Norway took the overall lead in the tournament thanks to this draw. They also took the lead through Jan Fjortoft, only to see Raymond Vella equalise after exchanging passes with Charles Scherri and Hubert Suda.

Saturday, February 17

Feb 17 = Dubai – friendly intl
United Arab Emirates 0
Sweden 2 (Rehn 25, Ingesson 85)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Aziz (UAE)

UAE: Musabah – E Meer, Mubarak Ghanim Mubarak, I Meer, Khalil Ghanim Mubarak, Mohammed, Thanjuma, Abdul Rahman Haddad (Nasser Khamis Mubarak 46), Ismail, Talyani, Bakheet.

Sweden: Eriksson – Kamark, Erlingmark, J Eriksson, Schwarz, Engqvist, Rehn, Ingesson, J Nilsson, K Andersson, Ekstrom (Eskilsson).

Sweden, with their home-based team, avenged the defeat of the previous Wednesday although it was not until five minutes from time that Ingesson secured the victory. Stefan Rehn, fighting hard to regain international form after his lean spell with Everton, earned a further opportunity to impress manager Olle Nordin.

Sunday, February 18

Feb 18 = Cairo – intl friendly
Egypt 0
South Korea 0
Att: 6,000.

The South Koreans were on their way back after the Malta tournament – which should have involved four teams but the Saudi Arabians withdrew shortly beforehand. South Korea had gained some extra match practice from an unofficial friendly against Norway in Valletta which they had won 3-0.

Tuesday, February 20

Feb 20 = Los Angeles – Marboro Cup semi-final
Colombia 0
Soviet Union 0
Att: 18,132. Colombia win 4-2 on pens.
Ref: Bratsis (US)

Colombia: Higuita – Herrera, Perea, Mendoza, Gomez – Cabrera, Alvarez, Rincon, Redin – Guerrero, Iguaran (Fajardo 47).

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov (Tishenko 46), Kuznetsov, Zigmantovich, Luzhny (Kolyvanov 44) – Rats, Cherkasov, Litovchenko, Yaremchuk – Protasov, Rodionov.

Goalkeeper Rene Higuita converted the decisive penalty as Colombia beat the Soviet Union on what was their first senior international appearance ever in the United States. Colombia thus qualified to face the Mexican club, Guadalajara, in the final of this leg of the Marlboro Cup. The Mexicans, later this same evening, would beat World Cup qualifiers Costa Rica by 3-0 thanks to goals from Eduardo De la Torre, Benjamin Galindo and Demetrio Madero. Higuita was the all-round hero against the Soviets. He saved penalty kicks from Litovchenko and Kolivanov and then stepped up to shoot the decider past opposite number Viktor Chanov. Earlier Colombia had forced the pace for much of the first half though Higuita had to make one excellent early stop from Rodionov.

Weds, February 21

Feb 21 = Brussels – intl friendly
Belgium 0
Sweden 0
Att: 5,500. Ref: L Kaupe (Aus)

Belgium: Preud'homme (Dewilde 69) – Gerets, Grun, Demol, Clijsters, Versavel (Vervoort 74), F Van der Elst, Emmers, Degryse (Claesen 74), Ceulemans, Van der Linden (Nilis 46).

Sweden: Ravelli – R Nilsson, Hysen (S Schwarz 46), P Larsson, Ljung – Engqvist, Ingesson (N Larsson 64), J Nilsson, Rehn – Magnusson (Ekstrom 58), Pettersson.

Belgium were again a disappointment as they were held goalless by fellow World Cup finalists. The Belgians had lost their previous match (in Greece) and previously drawn twice in succession in the World Cup qualifiers against Switzerland and Luxembourg. Sweden almost went ahead in the 14th minute but Belgian keeper Preud'homme recovered after a defensive mix-up to snatch the ball clear of Hysen and Pettersson. At the other end Belgium's Degryse outpaced the Italy defence only for Ravelli to save the day. Then Van der Linden cwas just too high with a 22nd-minute shot. In the second half Sweden might have won the game themselves. Joakim Nilsson went close with a 30-yard drive then substitute Ekstrom saw a shot cleared on the goalline by Gerets. Pettersson missed another chance when he was foiled by substitute keeper Dewilde in the 74th minute.

Feb 21 = Rotterdam – intl friendly
Holland 0
Italy 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Biguet (Fr)

Holland: Van Breukelen – Van Aerle, Rijkaard (Sturing 46), R Koeman, Van Tiggelen – Vanenburg, Wouters, E Koeman, Richard Witschge – Bosman, Van Basten (Kieft 67).

Italy: Zenga – Ferrara, Maldini, Bergomi, Vierchowod, Marocchi, Ancelotti, De Napoli, Giannini (De Agostini 67), Baggio (Mancini 71), Carnevale (Serena 81).

Holland and Italy were both enormous disappointments as they hid, either by mistake or on purpose, their true World Cup finals potential. Holland played nine of their 1988 European title-winning side and provided a debut for newly-acclaimed Young Player of the Year Richard Witschge (brother of Saint-Etienne's Rob Witschge). Italy were without the injured of ill Vialli, Ferri, Berti and Baresi. Manager Vicini had considered experimenting with the young Milan stopper Alessandro Costacurta but discarded the idea after being forced to hurriedly recall forgotten veteran Vierchowod to deputise at the last moment for Baresi. The closest anyone came to scoring was two minutes after half-time when a 20-yard drive from Jan Wouters snapped against Zenga's right-hand post and ricocheted out across goal. Holland – under the temporary care of Nol de Ruiter since manager Thys Libregts was convalescing after a hernia operation – substituted both Rijkaard and Van Basten during the game in compliance with a request from Milan, worried about their heavy club commitments.

Feb 21 = Alicante – intl friendly
Spain 1 (Manolo 42)
Czechoslovakia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,000. **Ref:** Philippoz (Swz)

Spain: Zubizarreta – Chendo, Andrinua (Juanito Rodriguez 62), Gorriz, Villaroyo, Michel (Rafa Paz 62), Roberto (Milla 57), Martin Vazquez, Sanchis, Manolo (Salinas 80), Butragueno (Pardeza 62).

Czechoslovakia: Stejskal – Bielik (Weiss 66), Chovanec, Nemecek, Bilek, Hadlec, Hasek, Kinier, Moravcik, Skuhravy, Lyhovy (Cerny 58).

Spain began their World Cup warm-up programme with an encouraging win over their fellow finalists. Spain were always on top but the Czechs, with Hasek in excellent form, showed glimpses of their potential despite the absences of several foreign-based playes because of club commitments. Spain might have gone ahead after seven minutes but Butragueno had a 'goal' disallowed for offside. Then Martin Vazquez shot just wide. At the other end Zubizarreta had to make a sharp 22nd-minute stop from Nemecek. Spain went ahead just before the interval when Manolo shot home after a cross from Roberto. Michel was Spain's best player but there were no further goals. The nearest anyone else came was when debutant substitute Rafa Paz fired just too high in the 77th minute.

Feb 21 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup Opening Match
Kuwait 1 (Wayil Suleiman 10)
Bahrain 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000.

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS

Hosts Kuwait made a useful start to the Gulf Cup with this success. They won more easily than the score suggests although arrived, at the time after ten minutes, against the early run of play. Kuwait skipper Nasser Ghanim curled a free kick into the penalty box for Wayil Suleiman to head past Hamoud Sultan. One prestige blow for Kuwait occured before the tournament when Saudi Arabia withdrew. Their protest was aimed at the tournament emblem – two horses which denied a Saudi siege of a Kuwait outpost in the 1920s. Kuwait did withdrawm all offending posters but the Saudis refused to reconsider their position – suggesting that the emblem issues was merely a convenient excuse.

Feb 21 = Casablanca – intl friendly
Morocco 2
Ivory Coast 1

Feb 21 = Banjul – intl friendly
Guinea-Bissau 1
Gambia 0

Thursday, February 22

Feb 22 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Oman 1 (Hilal Hamoud 29)
United Arab Amirates 1 (Fahad Khamis 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000.

The Emirates suffered a nasty surprise when little Oman held them while they had one eye directed towards Italy and the World Cup finals soon enough. Manager Bernard Blaut of the UAE, who had taken over from Zagalo, said: "I have never seen us play so badly. Because one boy (Zuhair Bakhit) was unfit we had to make changes in attack – though we should never have wasted the five clear chances we did get." Oman went ahead when Hilal Hamoud headed on a Zaher Salim free kick in the 29th minute. Keeper Muhsin Musabah fell over backwards as the ball flew at him and bounced on over the goalline. The Emirates equalised almost on the hour. Substitute Fahad Khamis pushed the ball home from close range after it rebounded down from the bar. Oman's West German coach, Bernd Patzke, said: "I'm delighted. It's always good to take a point from a World Cup finalist."

Feb 22 = Los Angeles – Marboro Cup, third place play-off
Sov Union 2 (Litovchenko 52, Cherenkov 60)
Costa Rica 1 (Cayasso 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Bratsis (US)

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov, Kuznetsov, Pteverva, Zigmantovich, Rats, Litovchenko, Yaremchuk (Tatarchuk 52), Cherenkov, Protasov, Rodionov.

C Rica: Cornejo – Garro, Flores, Camacho, Obando (Solano 46) – Chavarria (Marin 27), Marchena (Montero 57), Diaz, Cayasso – Medford, Coronado.

Friday, February 23

Feb 23 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Bahrain 0
Qatar 0
Att: 6,500.

Saturday, February 24

Feb 24 = Stanford, Conn – intl friendly
United States 1 (John Harkes 42 pen)
Soviet Union 3 (Vladimir Besonov 29, Feodor Cherenkov 44, Oleg Protasov 68)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 61,000. **Ref:** Mauro (US)

US: Meola – Armstrong (Trittschuh 52), Windischmann, Doyle, Banks (Caligiuri 55), Stollmeyer, Ramos, Harkes, Murray (Krumpe 77), Wynalda (Eichmann 74), Vermes.

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov, Kuznetsov, Zigmantovich (Tishenko 74), Luzhny, Rats, Tveiba, Yaremchuk, Cherenkov, Kolivanov (Protasov 46), Rodionov (Tatarchuk 77).

Even in a weakened state the Soviets were too good for their hosts in the first international match stages between the two countries. The Soviets were without the injured Dobrovolski, Mikhailichenko and Demianenko. But they went ahead after 29 minutes when Kuznetsov and Cherenkov opened the way to goal for Besonov. A John Harkes penalty after a foul on Peter Vermes by Oleg Luzhny brought the Americans back into the action. But not for long. Footballer of the Year Cherenkov scored afer a Besonov free kick rebound from the defensive wall. Substitute Protasov scored a Soviet third in the 68th minute. Later US coach Bob Gansler said: "You can run all the films you want, have discussions and lectures. But until you are on the pitch with a team of this character you don't really know what playing at the World Cup finals means."

Sunday, February 25

Feb 25 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Kuwait 1 (Moyid Al-Hadad 60)
Oman 1 (Muttar Khalifa 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Orellana (Ec)

Oman pulled off another surprise by holding their hosts in a match which saw Oman's Nasser Khamis and Kuwaiti skipper Nasser Ghanim sent off by Ecuadorian referee Jorge Orellana. Oman took the lead shortly after half-time through Muttar Khalifa, who converted a pass from Tayib Abdul Noor. Kuwait equalised on the hour through Moyid Al-Hadad, thanks to a mistake by Oman goalkeeper Yusuf Obaid. In between the goals came the expulsions, in a 55th-minute set-to. At the final whistle there was violent chaos. Kuwait security forces surrounded the Oman team to protect them from the angry crowd and there was a scuffle between the Oman captain, Hilal Hameed, and one of the security men. Hameed appeared to elbow the policeman who then retaliated by knocking Hameed down with his riot stick. Later Sheik Fahd Al-Ahmed, chairman of the Gulf Cup organising committee and a brother of the Emir of Kuwait, threatened to abandon the tournament if such scenes were repeated. Ironically the second half of this match also produced the best football so far in the cup.

Monday, February 26

Feb 26 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Iraq 1
Bahrain 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Hadji (UAE)

Tuesday, February 27

Feb 27 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Qatar 0
United Arab Emirates 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** Saadki (Iraq)

UAE: Musabah – Ibrahim Mir, Mubarak Ghanem, Ismael Mir, Khalil Ghanem – N Jamis, Thani, Ismail, Sangur – Talyani, F Khamis.

The UAE were again a disappointment, barely threatening the Qatar defence.

Weds, February 28

Feb 28 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Kuwait 1 (Moyid Al-Hadad 48)
Iraq 1 (Adil Otman og 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Julenberg (Hol)

The tournament's joint favourites produced an appropriate result from a match which improved in the second half.

Feb 28 = Cairo – intl friendly
Egypt 0
Austria 0
Att: 21,000. **Ref:** Bouillet (Fr)

Egypt: Shoubeir – Ibrahim Hassan, Hisham Yakan, Hani Ramzy, Rabei Yasin, Ahmed El-Kas, Magdi Abdel Ghani, Ismail Youssef, Ahmed Ramzy, Tarek Suleiman, Hossam Hassan.

Austria: Lindenberger (Konsel 46) – Russ, Schottel (Aigner 80), Artner, Pecl, Herzog, Linzmaier, Hortnagl, Keglevits (Degeorgi 71), Pfeifenberger, A Ögris (Reisinger 56).

Austria's first World Cup warm-up was a disappointing affair in the absence of star striker Toni Polster.

Feb 28 = Montpellier – intl friendly
France 2 (Jean-Pierre Papin 43, Eric Cantona 81)
West Germany 1 (Andy Moller 36)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Marcos Ramos (Sp)

France: Martini – Amoros, Casoni, Boli (Blanc 49), Di Meco, Pardo, Garde, Deschamps, Ferreri (Vahirua 64), Papin, Cantona.

West Germany: Illgner – Berthold, A Reinhardt, Augenthaler, Brehme – Moller, Hassler, Matthaus, bein – Riedle (Littbarski 65), Klinsmann.

France inflicted the Germans' first defeat in 20 months and put on one of their best displays for a long time to give manager Michel Platini a glimpse of a light at the end of the rebuilding tunnel. France wasted a string of early chances and paid the penalty when Andy Moller headed the Germans in front from a Thomas Berthold cross. In the closing stages of the half the penetrative link between Pardo in midfield and Papin up front began to worry the Germans and it was no surprise when Papin scored as the defence hesitated, claiming offside. In the second half Martini made two fine saves from Moller and Klinsmann before France re-established their control. Blanc had a header scrambled out of the goalmouth in the 79th minute then Cantona headed home the winner from a cross by another substitute, Pascal Vahirua.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tirol	27	16	9	2	53	25	24
Austria	27	17	3	7	61	36	22
Rapid	27	14	7	6	563	36	21
Admira	27	14	5	8	65	44	19
A. Salzburg	27	8	11	8	35	38	17
St. Poelten	27	8	11	8	29	34	17
Sturm Graz	27	7	13	7	24	22	16
Vienna	27	7	7	13	38	48	11

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	26	19	5	2	55	19	42
Club Brugge	26	18	6	2	54	19	42
Mechelen	26	14	11	1	50	9	39
Antwerp	26	12	10	4	51	24	34
Standard	26	11	8	7	37	24	30
Gent	26	9	11	6	33	28	29
Cercle	26	10	7	9	39	32	27
Lokeren	26	9	7	10	27	45	25
Charleroi	26	8	8	10	35	37	24
Kortrijk	26	8	7	11	29	40	23
FC Liege	26	6	10	10	22	30	22
Ekeren	26	9	4	13	32	40	22
Beerschot	26	8	6	12	26	42	22
Lierse	26	8	5	13	30	52	21
St. Truiden	26	6	8	12	19	37	20
Waregem	26	5	6	15	25	52	16
Racing M	26	4	7	15	20	45	15
Beveren	26	5	5	16	19	48	15

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFKA Sredets	19	13	6	0	61	14	32
Slavia	19	8	9	2	215	14	25
Sp Levski	19	8	6	5	37	25	22
Pirin	19	8	6	5	27	21	22
Etur	19	8	5	6	26	22	21
Lok. Plovdiv	19	9	2	8	27	26	20
Sliven	19	9	2	8	27	26	20
Chernomorets	19	7	5	7	25	22	19
Lok Gorna O	19	7	5	7	16	22	19
Lok. Sofia	19	7	3	9	29	31	17
Beroe	19	5	7	7	28	32	17
Hebur	19	6	5	8	19	24	17
Dounav	19	4	6	9	13	24	14
Cherno More	19	4	3	12	19	42	11
Trakia Botev	19	3	4	12	11	34	10

EAST GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dresden	17	9	8	0	32	13	26
Magdeburg	17	10	4	3	29	13	24
Berlin	17	7	8	2	27	18	22
Hansa Rostok	17	7	7	3	27	19	21
K-M-Stadt	17	7	7	3	23	15	21
E. Cottbus	17	6	6	5	23	25	18
C Z Jena	17	6	5	6	13	18	17
Lok Leipzig	17	6	4	7	21	22	16
Stahl Eisenh	17	1	13	3	16	18	15
Chemie Halle	17	3	7	7	22	28	13
Stahl Br	17	3	7	7	19	26	13
Rot-Weiss E	17	3	5	9	16	25	11
Fortschritt B	17	5	1	11	15	34	11
Wismut Aue	17	2	6	9	13	22	10

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	29	18	6	5	42	18	42
Marseille	28	17	7	4	59	25	41
Monaco	29	11	13	5	27	18	35
Sochaux	29	14	5	10	39	33	33
Lyon	29	12	8	9	32	27	32
Paris SG	29	13	5	11	37	33	31
Nantes	29	10	10	9	28	24	30
Toulouse	29	9	11	9	26	28	29
Caen	29	10	8	11	27	35	28
Auxerre	29	8	11	10	35	33	27
Metz	29	7	13	9	27	28	27
St. Etienne	28	10	7	11	33	35	27
Lille	29	9	7	13	32	35	25
Cannes	29	8	9	12	31	38	25
Toulon	29	8	9	12	23	38	25
Montpellier	29	9	6	14	35	41	24
Racing Paris	29	9	6	14	33	49	24
Mulhouse	29	8	7	14	31	40	23
Nice	29	6	11	12	28	39	23

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aston Villa	29	18	4	7	46	26	58
Liverpool	28	16	8	4	53	27	56
Arsenal	29	14	5	10	42	29	47
Chelsea	30	12	10	8	46	41	46
Forest	29	12	8	9	42	33	44
Coventry	30	13	5	12	33	41	44
Southampton	29

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS

Monday, February 5

Feb 5 = Valletta – Malta tournament
Norway 3 (O Berg 53, Skammelsrud 85, Tangen 89)
South Korea 2 (Hwang Seon-hong 36, Lee Sang-yoon 57)
HT: 0-1. **Att.** 1,500. **Ref:** Agius (Mal)

Norway: By Rise – H Hansen, J H Halvoren, Tangen, Halle, Loken, Bohinen, O Berg, J I Jakobsen (Skammelsrud 23), Jorn Andersen, Fjortoft.

S Korea: Kim Pong-joo – Choi Kang-hee (Lee Young-ik 20), Chung Yong-hwan, Hong Kyung-bo, Gu Sang-bum, Noh Soo-jin (Hwang Bo-kwan 26), Yoon Deuk-yeo, Lee-Sang-yoon, Kim Joo-sung, Choi Soon-ho, Hwang Seon-hong (Byun Byung-joo 23).

Weds, February 7

Feb 7 = Valletta – Malta tournament
Malta 1 (Raymond Vella 38)
Norway 1 (Fjortoft 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Edgar Azzopardi (Mal)

Malta: Cini – Ed Camilleri, R Vella, Galea, Falzon (Laferla 23), C Scerri, Gregory, Degiorgio, Darabott, Zarb, Suda.

Norway: Thorstvedt – Halle, Johnsen, Tangen, Bjornebye, Loken, J Berg (O Berg 23), Bohinen, Skammelsrud, Sorloth (Jorn Andersen 46), Fjortoft.

Norway took the overall lead in the tournament thanks to this draw. They also took the lead through Jan Fjortoft, only to see Raymond Vella equalise after exchanging passes with Charles Scherri and Hubert Suda.

Saturday, February 17

Feb 17 = Dubai – friendly intl
United Arab Emirates 0
Sweden 2 (Rehn 25, Ingesson 85)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Aziz (UAE)

UAE: Musabah – E Meer, Mubarak Ghanim Mubarak, I Meer, Khalil Ghanim Mubarak, Mohammed, Thanijuma, Abdul Rahman Haddad (Nasser Khamis Mubarak 46), Ismail, Talyani, Bakheet.

Sweden: Eriksson – Kamark, Erlingmark, J Eriksson, Schwarz, Engqvist, Rehn, Ingesson, J Nilsson, K Andersson, Ekstrom (Eskilsson).

Sweden, with their home-based team, avenged the defeat of the previous Wednesday although it was not until five minutes from time that Ingesson secured the victory. Stefan Rehn, fighting hard to regain international form after his lean spell with Everton, earned a further opportunity to impress manager Olle Nordin.

Sunday, February 18

Feb 18 = Cairo – intl friendly
Egypt 0
South Korea 0
Att: 6,000.

The South Koreans were on their way back after the Malta tournament – which should have involved four teams but the Saudi Arabians withdrew shortly beforehand. South Korea had gained some extra match practice from an unofficial friendly against Norway in Valletta which they had won 3-0.

Tuesday, February 20

Feb 20 = Los Angeles – Marboro Cup semi-final
Colombia 0
Soviet Union 0
Att: 18,132. Colombia win 4-2 on pens. Ref: Bratsis (US)

Colombia: Higuita – Herrera, Perea, Mendoza, Gomez – Cabrera, Alvarez, Rincon, Redin – Guerrero, Iguaran (Fajardo 47).

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov (Tishenko 46), Kuznetsov, Zigmantovich, Luzhny (Kolyvanov 44) – Rats, Cherkasov, Litovchenko, Yaremchuk – Protasov, Rodionov.

Goalkeeper Rene Higuita converted the decisive penalty as Colombia beat the Soviet Union on what was their first senior international appearance ever in the United States. Colombia thus qualified to face the Mexican club, Guadalajara, in the final of this leg of the Marlboro Cup. The Mexicans, later this same evening, would beat World Cup qualifiers Costa Rica by 3-0 thanks to goals from Eduardo De la Torre, Benjamin Galindo and Demetrio Madero. Higuita was the all-round hero against the Soviets. He saved penalty kicks from Litovchenko and Kolivanov and then stepped up to shoot the decider past opposite number Viktor Chanov. Earlier Colombia had forced the pace for much of the first half though Higuita had to make one excellent early stop from Rodionov.

Weds, February 21

Feb 21 = Brussels – intl friendly
Belgium 0
Sweden 0
Att: 5,500. Ref: L Kaupe (Aus)

Belgium: Preud'homme (Dewilde 69) – Gerets, Grun, Demol, Clijsters, Versavel (Vervoort 74), F Van der Elst, Emmers, Degryse (Claesen 74), Ceulemans, Van der Linden (Nilis 46).

Sweden: Ravelli – R Nilsson, Hysen (S Schwarz 46), P Larsson, Ljung – Engqvist, Ingesson (N Larsson 64), J Nilsson, Rehn – Magnusson (Ekstrom 58), Pettersson.

Belgium were again a disappointment as they were held goalless by fellow World Cup finalists. The Belgians had lost their previous match (in Greece) and previously drawn twice in succession in the World Cup qualifiers against Switzerland and Luxembourg. Sweden almost went ahead in the 14th minute but Belgian keeper Preud'homme recovered after a defensive mix-up to snatch the ball clear of Hysen and Pettersson. At the other end Belgium's Degrysse outpaced the Italy defence only for Ravelli to save the day. Then Van der Linden cwas just too high with a 22nd-minute shot. In the second half Sweden might have won the game themselves. Joakim Nilsson went close with a 30-yard drive then substitute Ekstrom saw a shot cleared on the goalline by Gerets. Pettersson missed another chance when he was foiled by substitute keeper Dewilde in the 74th minute.

Feb 21 = Rotterdam – intl friendly
Holland 0
Italy 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Biguet (Fr)

Holland: Van Breukelen – Van Aerle, Rijkaard (Sturing 46), R Koeman, Van Tiggelen – Vanenburg, Wouters, E Koeman, Richard Witschge – Bosman, Van Basten (Kieft 67).

Italy: Zenga – Ferrara, Maldini, Bergomi, Vierchowod, Marocchi, Ancelotti, De Napoli, Giannini (De Agostini 67), Baggio (Mancini 71), Carnevale (Serena 81).

Holland and Italy were both enormous disappointments as they hid, either by mistake or on purpose, their true World Cup finals potential. Holland played nine of their 1988 European title-winning side and provided a debut for newly-acclaimed Young Player of the Year Richard Witschge (brother of Saint-Etienne's Rob Witschge). Italy were without the injured of ill Vialli, Ferri, Berti and Baresi. Manager Vicini had considered experimenting with the young Milan stopper Alessandro Costacurta but discarded the idea after being forced to hurriedly recall forgotten veteran Vierchowod to deputise at the last moment for Baresi. The closest anyone came to scoring was two minutes after half-time when a 20-yard drive from Jan Wouters snapped against Zenga's right-hand post and ricocheted out across goal. Holland – under the temporary care of Nol de Ruiter since manager Thys Libregts was convalescing after a hernia operation – substituted both Rijkaard and Van Basten during the game in compliance with a request from Milan, worried about their heavy club commitments.

Feb 21 = Alicante – intl friendly
Spain 1 (Manolo 42)
Czechoslovakia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,000. **Ref:** Philippoz (Swz)

Spain: Zubizarreta – Chendo, Andrinua (Juanito Rodriguez 62), Gorriz, Villaroyo, Michel (Rafa Paz 62), Roberto (Milla 57), Martin Vazquez, Sanchis, Manolo (Salinas 80), Butragueno (Pardeza 62).

Czechoslovakia: Stejskal – Bielik (Weiss 66), Chovanec, Nemecek, Bilek, Hadlec, Hasek, Kinier, Moravcik, Skuhravy, Lyhovy (Cerny 58).

Spain began their World Cup warm-up programme with an encouraging win over their fellow finalists. Spain were always on top but the Czechs, with Hasek in excellent form, showed glimpses of their potential despite the absences of several foreign-based playes because of club commitments. Spain might have gone ahead after seven minutes but Butragueno had a 'goal' disallowed for offside. Then Martin Vazquez shot just wide. At the other end Zubizarreta had to make a sharp 22nd-minute stop from Nemecek. Spain went ahead just before the interval when Manolo shot home after a cross from Roberto. Michel was Spain's best player but there were no further goals. The nearest anyone else came was when debutant substitute Rafa Paz fired just too high in the 77th minute.

Feb 21 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup Opening Match
Kuwait 1 (Wayil Suleiman 10)
Bahrain 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000.

Hosts Kuwait made a useful start to the Gulf Cup with this success. They won more easily than the score suggests although arrived, at the time after ten minutes, against the early run of play. Kuwait skipper Nasser Ghanim curled a free kick into the penalty box for Wayil Suleiman to head past Hamoud Sultan. One prestige blow for Kuwait occured before the tournament when Saudi Arabia withdrew. Their protest was aimed at the tournament emblem – two horses which denied a Saudi siege of a Kuwait outpost in the 1920s. Kuwait did withdrawm all offending posters but the Saudis refused to reconsider their position – suggesting that the emblem issues was merely a convenient excuse.

Feb 21 = Casablanca – intl friendly
Morocco 2
Ivory Coast 1

Feb 21 = Banjul – intl friendly
Guinea-Bissau 1
Gambia 0

Thursday, February 22

Feb 22 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Oman 1 (Hilal Hamoud 29)
United Arab Amirates 1 (Fahad Khamis 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000.

The Emirates suffered a nasty surprise when little Oman held them while they had one eye directed towards Italy and the World Cup finals soon enough. Manager Bernard Blaut of the UAE, who had taken over from Zagalo, said: "I have never seen us play so badly. Because one boy (Zuhair Bakhit) was unfit we had to make changes in attack – though we should never have wasted the five clear chances we did get." Oman went ahead when Hilal Hamoud headed on a Zaher Salim free kick in the 29th minute. Keeper Muhsin Musabah fell over backwards as the ball flew at him and bounced on over the goalline. The Emirates equalised almost on the hour. Substitute Fahad Khamis pushed the ball home from close range after it rebounded down from the bar. Oman's West German coach, Bernd Patzke, said: "I'm delighted. It's always good to take a point from a World Cup finalist."

Feb 22 = Los Angeles – Marlboro Cup, third place play-off
Sov Union 2 (Litovchenko 52, Cherenkov 60)
Costa Rica 1 (Cayasso 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Bratsis (US)

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov, Kuznetsov, Pteverva, Zigmantovich, Rats, Litovchenko, Yaremchuk (Tatarchuk 52), Cherenkov, Protasov, Rodionov.

C Rica: Cornejo – Garro, Flores, Camacho, Obando (Solano 46) – Chavarria (Marin 27), Marchena (Montero 57), Diaz, Cayasso – Medford, Coronado.

Friday, February 23

Feb 23 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Bahrain 0
Qatar 0
Att: 6,500.

Saturday, February 24

Feb 24 = Stanford, Conn – intl friendly
United States 1 (John Harkes 42 pen)
Soviet Union 3 (Vladimir Besonov 29, Feodor Cherenkov 44, Oleg Protasov 68)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 61,000. **Ref:** Mauro (US)

US: Meola – Armstrong (Trittschuh 52), Windischmann, Doyle, Banks (Caligiuri 55), Stollmeyer, Ramos, Harkes, Murray (Krumpe 77), Wynalda (Eichmann 74), Vermes.

Sov Union: Chanov – Besonov, Kuznetsov, Zigmantovich (Tishenko 74), Luzhny, Rats, Tveiba, Yaremchuk, Cherenkov, Kolivanov (Protasov 46), Rodionov (Tatarchuk 77).

Even in a weakened state the Soviets were too good for their hosts in the first international match stages between the two countries. The Soviets were without the injured Dobrovolski, Mikhailichenko and Demianenko. But they went ahead after 29 minutes when Kuznetsov and Cherenkov opened the way to goal for Besonov. A John Harkes penalty after a foul on Peter Vermes by Oleg Luzhny brought the Americans back into the action. But not for long. Footballer of the Year Cherenkov scored afer a Besonov free kick rebound from the defensive wall. Substitute Protasov scored a Soviet third in the 68th minute. Later US coach Bob Gansler said: "You can run all the films you want, have discussions and lectures. But until you are on the pitch with a team of this character you don't really know what playing at the World Cup finals means."

Sunday, February 25

Feb 25 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Kuwait 1 (Moyid Al-Hadad 60)
Oman 1 (Muttar Khalifa 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Orellana (Ec)

Oman pulled off another surprise by holding their hosts in a match which saw Oman's Nasser Khamis and Kuwaiti skipper Nasser Ghanim sent off by Ecuadorian referee Jorge Orellana. Oman took the lead shortly after half-time through Muttar Khalifa, who converted a pass from Tayib Abdul Noor. Kuwait equalised on the hour through Moyid Al-Hadad, thanks to a mistake by Oman goalkeeper Yusuf Obaid. In between the goals came the expulsions, in a 55th-minute set-to. At the final whistle there was violent chaos. Kuwait security forces surrounded the Oman team to protect them from the angry crowd and there was a scuffle between the Oman captain, Hilal Hameed, and one of the security men. Hameed appeared to elbow the policeman who then retaliated by knocking Hameed down with his riot stick. Later Sheik Fahd Al-Ahmed, chairman of the Gulf Cup organising committee and a brother of the Emir of Kuwait, threatened to abandon the tournament if such scenes were repeated. Ironically the second half of this match also produced the best football so far in the cup.

Monday, February 26

Feb 26 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Iraq 1
Bahrain 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Hadji (UAE)

Tuesday, February 27

Feb 27 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Qatar 0
United Arab Emirates 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** Saadki (Iraq)

UAE: Musabah – Ibrahim Mir, Mubarak Ghanem, Ismael Mir, Khalil Ghanem – N Jamis, Thani, Ismail, Sangur – Talyani, F Khamis.

The UAE were again a disappointment, barely threatening the Qatar defence.

Weds, February 28

Feb 28 = Kuwait – Gulf Cup
Kuwait 1 (Moyid Al-Hadad 48)
Iraq 1 (Adil Otman og 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Julenberg (Hol)

The tournament's joint favourites produced an appropriate result from a match which improved in the second half.

Feb 28 = Cairo – intl friendly
Egypt 0
Austria 0
Att: 21,000. **Ref:** Bouillet (Fr)

Egypt: Shoubeir – Ibrahim Hassan, Hisham Yaken, Hani Ramzy, Rabei Yasin, Ahmed El-Kas, Magdi Abdel Ghani, Ismail Youssef, Ahmed Ramzy, Tarek Suleiman, Hossam Hassan.

Austria: Lindenberger (Konsel 46) – Russ, Schottel (Aigner 80), Artner, Pecl, Herzog, Linzmaier, Hortnagl, Keglevits (Degeorgi 71), Pfeifenberger, A Ogris (Reisinger 56).

Austria's first World Cup warm-up was a disappointing affair in the absence of star striker Toni Polster.

Feb 28 = Montpellier – intl friendly
France 2 (Jean-Pierre Papin 43, Eric Cantona 81)
West Germany 1 (Andy Moller 36)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Marcos Ramos (Sp)

France: Martini – Amoros, Casoni, Boli (Blanc 49), Di Meco, Pardo, Garde, Deschamps, Ferreri (Vahirua 64), Papin, Cantona.

West Germany: Illgner – Berthold, A Reinhardt, Augenthaler, Brehme – Moller, Hassler, Matthaus, bein – Riedle (Littbarski 65), Klinsmann.

France inflicted the Germans' first defeat in 20 months and put on one of their best displays for a long time to give manager Michel Platini a glimpse of a light at the end of the rebuilding tunnel. France wasted a string of early chances and paid the penalty when Andy Moller headed the Germans in front from a Thomas Berthold cross. In the closing stages of the half the penetrative link between Pardo in midfield and Papin up front began to worry the Germans and it was no surprise when Papin scored as the defence hesitated, claiming offside. In the second half Martini made two fine saves from Moller and Klinsmann before France re-established their control. Blanc had a header scrambled out of the goalmouth in the 79th minute then Cantona headed home the winner from a cross by another substitute, Pascal Vahirua.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Tirol	27	16	9	2	53	25	24
Austria	27	17	3	7	61	36	22
Rapid	27	14	7	6	56	36	21
Admira	27	14	5	8	65	44	19
A. Salzburg	27	8	11	8	35	38	17
St. Poelten	27	8	11	8	29	34	17
Sturm Graz	27	7	13	7	24	22	16
Vienna	27	7	7	13	38	48	11

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	26	19	5	2	55	19	42
Club Brugge	26	18	6	2	54	19	42
Mechelen	26	14	11	1	50	9	39
Antwerp	26	12	10	4	51	24	34
Standard	26	11	8	7	37	24	30
Gent	26	9	11	6	33	28	29
Cercle	26	10	7	9	39	32	27
Lokeren	26	9	7	10	27	45	25
Charleroi	26	8	8	10	35	37	24
Kortrijk	26	8	7	11	29	40	23
FC Liege	26	6	10	10	22	30	22
Ekeren	26	9	4	13	32	40	22
Beerschot	26	8	6	12	26	42	22
Lierse	26	8	5	13	30	52	21
St. Truiden	26	6	8	12	19	37	20
Waregem	26	5	6	15	25	52	16
Racing M	26	4	7	15	20	45	15
Beveren	26	5	5	16	19	48	15

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFKA Sredets	19	13	6	0	61	14	32
Slavia	19	8	9	2	215	14	25
Sp Levski	19	8	6	5	37	25	22
Pirin	19	8	6	5	27	21	22
Etur	19	8	5	6	26	22	21
Lok. Plovdiv	19	9	2	8	27	26	20
Sliven	19	9	2	8	27	26	20
Chernomorets	19	7	5	7	25	22	19
Lok Gorna O	19	7	5	7	16	22	19
Lok. Sofia	19	7	3	9	29	31	17
Beroe	19	5	7	7	28	32	17
Hebur	19	6	5	8	19	24	17
Dounav	19	4	6	9	13	24	14
Cherno More	19	4	3	12	19	42	11
Trakia Botev	19	3	4	12	11	34	10

EAST GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dresden	17	9	8	0	32	13	26
Magdeburg	17	10	4	3	29	13	24
Berlin	17	7	8	2	27	18	22
Hansa Rostok	17	7	7	3	27	19	21
K-M-Stadt	17	7	7	3	23	15	21
E. Cottbus	17	6	6	5	23	25	18
C Z Jena	17	6	5	6	13	18	17
Lok Leipzig	17	6	4	7	21	22	16
Stahl Eisenh	17	1	13	3	16	18	15
Chemie Halle	17	3	7	7	22	28	13
Stahl Br	17	3	7	7	19	26	13
Rot-Weiss E	17	3	5	9	16	25	11
Fortschritt B	17	5	1	11	15	34	11
Wismut Aue	17	2	6	9	13	22	10

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	29	18	6	5	42	18	42
Marseille	28	17	7	4	59	25	41
Monaco	29	11	13	5	27	18	35
Sochaux	29	14	5	10	39	33	33
Lyon	29	12	8	9	32	27	32
Paris SG	29	13	5	11	37	33	31
Nantes	29	10	10	9	28	24	30
Toulouse	29	9	11	9	26	28	29
Caen	29	10	8	11	27	35	28
Auxerre	29	8	11	10	35	33	27
Metz	29	7	13	9	27	28	27
St. Etienne	28	10	7	11	33	35	27
Lille	29	9	7	13	32	35	25
Cannes	29	8	9	12	31	38	25
Toulon	29	8	9	12	23	38	25
Montpellier	29	9	6	14	35	41	24
Racing Paris	29	9	6	14	33	49	24
Mulhouse	29	8	7	14	31	40	23
Nice	29	6	11	12	28	39	23

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aston Villa	29	18	4	7	46	26	58
Liverpool	28	16	8	4	53	27	56
Arsenal	29	14	5	10	42	29	47
Chelsea	30	12	10	8	46	41	46
Forest	29	12	8	9	42	33	44
Coventry	30	13	5	12	33	41	44
Southampton	29	11	10	8	58	50	43
Everton	28	12	6	10	39	34	42
Tottenham	30	12	6	12	43	39	42
Norwich	30	10	11	9	31	32	41
Wimbledon	28	9	12	7	37	32	39
QPR	27	10	9	8	33	30	39
Derby	28	11	5	12	34	26	38
Sheff. Wed	30	9	9	12	28	38	36
C. Palace	28	9	6	13	32	55	33
Man. Utd	29	8	8	13	35	39	32
Luton	30	6	12	12	33	46	30
Man. City	29	7	9	13	30	44	30
Millwall	29	5	10	14	34	49	25
Charlton	30	5	9	16	24	42	24

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	25	16	8	1	54	23	40
Olympiakos	25	16	6	3	42	18	38
AEK	25	15	7	3	46	14	37
PAOK	25	15	5	5	35	18	35
Heraklis	25	12	7	6	36	24	31
OFi	20	11	4	10	35	27	26
Larissa	25	9	7	9	29	30	25
Aris	25	8	9	8	27	29	25
Panionios	25	7	9	9	34	40	23
Doxa	25	7	7	11	26	27	21
Apollon	25	6	9	10	24	28	21
Levadiakos	25	9	6	10	27	28	20
Kalamaria	25	6	8	11	23	27	20
Panseraikos	25	6	7	12	26	36	19
Ionikos	25	6	6	13	22	42	18
Xanthi	25	7	4	14	23	44	18
Volos	25	7	2	16	23	49	16
Ethnikos	25	5	3	17	13	39	12

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV Eind.	26	15	6	5	82	31	36
Ajax	25	13	8	4	48	19	34
Roda JC	26	12	9	5	40	29	33
Vitesse	26	12	8	6	42	24	32
FC Twente	26	11	10	5	33	32	32
Fort. Sittard	26	9	13	4	27	20	31
FC Groningen	26	9	11	6	38	30	29
Volendam	26	11	7	8	36	30	29
RKC	26	11	7	8	37	33	29
Den Haag	25	10	5	10	48	50	25
Feyenoord	26	6	11	9	37	39	23
Sparta	26	9	5	12	36	46	23
MVV	26	7	9	10	33	49	23
FC Utrecht	26	7	8	11	21	35	22
NEC	26	5	9	12	27	49	19
Den Bosch	26	3	12	11	18	35	18
Willem II	26	5	7	14	28	41	17
Haarlem	26	3	5	18	18	57	11

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ujpest Dozsa	19	14	1	4	31	32	43
MTK-VM	19	12	3	4	27	11	39
Pecs	19	10	6	3	27	13	36
Ferencvaros	19	8	4	7	27	22	28
Siotok	19	6	8	5	18	16	26
Videoton	19	6	8	5	14	17	26
Tatabanya	19	8	2	9	12	18	26
BP Honved	19	6	5	8	20	23	23
Vasas	19	6	5	8	20	24	23
Belescsaba	19	6	5	8	14	22	23
Veszprem	19	4	10	5	13	16	22
Debrecen	19	5	7	7	13	19	22
Haladas	19	5	5	9	24	28	20
Vac	19	3	9	7	14	21	18
Raba ETO	19	3	8	8	18	20	17
Csepel	19	2	10	7	18	28	16

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AC Milan	29	19	4	6	48	24	42
Napoli	29	16	9	4	44	28	41
Sampdoria	29	14	10	5	42	24	38
Internazionale	29	15	8	6	42	25	38
Juventus	29	13	12	4	46	29	38
Roma	29	12	10	7	36	35	34
Atalanta	29	11	10	8	32	30	32
Bologna	29	8	14	7	24	29	30
Bari	29	5	17	7	30	28	27
Lazio	29	7	12	10	29	30	26
Genoa	29	5	14	10	22	27	24
Lecce	29	8	8	13	23	40	24
Fiorentina	29	5	12	12	34	38	22
Cesena	29	5	12	12	23	34	22
Verona	29	5	12	12	21	33	22
Udinese	29	5	12	12	31	45	22
Cremonese	29	4	13	12	27	39	21
Ascoli	29	3	13	13	18	34	19

N. IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portadown	20	11	7	2	31	13	40
Glenavon	20	11	5	4	35	24	38
Ballymena	20	11	4	5	32	20	37
Linfield	20	11	2	7	43	30	35
Glentoran	20	9	7	4	27	15	34
Newry	20	9	3	8	33	24	30
Coleraine	20	8	6	6	32	26	30
Bangor	20	9	3	8	19	15	30
Cliftonville	20	7	5	8	31	35	26
Larne	20	6	6	8	25	29	24
Carr. Rangers	20	6	4	10	22	28	22
Ards	20	4	5	11	19	33	17
Crusaders	20	2	6	12	20	43	12
Distillery	20	2	5	13	16	50	11

REP. IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St. Patrick's	29	20	6	3	42	21	46
Derry City	29	19	6	4	62	15	44
Dundalk	29	15	7	7	43	23	37
Shamrock Rov	29	14	8	7	40	32	36
Shelbourne	29	9	13	7	36	27	31
Cork City	29	11	8	10	25	23	30
Bohemians	29	12	5	12	32	31	29
Galway Utd	29	9	8	12	34	56	26
Athlone Town	29	5	12	12	25	42	22
Limerick City	29	6	7	16	24	40	19
Drogheda Utd	29	4	7	18	17	39	15
U.C.D.	29	4	5	20	22	55	13

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	24	19	4	1	53	9	42
Benfica	24	16	7	1	60	11	39
Guimaraes	24	14	7	3	35	15	35
Sporting	24	13	8	3	29	15	34
Setubal	24	12	6	6	34	23	30
Chaves	24	8	9	7	26	31	25
Boavista	24	8	7	9	33	23	23
Amadora	24	8	7	8	27	20	23
Belenenses	23	10	3	13	19	25	23
Braga	24	7	8	9	22	26	22
Tirsense	24	5	11	8	14	22	21
Beira Mar	24	7	6	11	14	27	20
Maritimo	24	4	11	9	17	30	19
Uniao	24	4	9	11	17	32	17
Penafiel	24	6	5	13	18	39	17
Nacional	24	2	12	10	19	36	16
Portimonense	24	4	4	16	17	42	12
Feirense	24	3	6	15	15	43	12

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	29	16	9	4	39	16	41
Aberdeen	29	13	8	8	47	30	34
Hearts	29	13	8	8	48	32	34
Celtic	29	10	11	8	34	25	31
Dundee U	29	9	11	9	32	34	29
Motherwell	29	9	10	10	37	38	28
Hibs	29	10	8	11	29	35	28
Dunfermline	29	9	6	14	31	43	24
St. Mirren	29	8	7	14	22	43	23
Dundee	29	4	10	15	34	57	18

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	30	21	7	2	85	28	49
Barcelona	30	18	4	8	69	31	40
Atl. Madrid	30	16	8	6	42	27	40
Valencia	30	14	12	4	50	35	40
Sevilla	30	16	4	10	54	35	36
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LETTERS

PEN PALS

21-YEAR-OLD MALE would like male or female penpals worldwide. Hobbies are football and pop music. All letters welcome. Write in English or French to: Mahmood Jowahir, 10 Ave Robert Edward Hart, Rose-Hill, Mauritius Island.

MALAYSIAN, 15, seeks pen pals. Hobbies are collecting stamps, cycling and travel. Write to: Lee Poo Ching, 24-1 Jalan Bunga Melati, Setapak 53000 K.L. West Malaysia.

15-YEAR-OLD MALAYSIAN wishes to correspond with people worldwide. Hobbies are travelling, reading, shopping and swimming. Please write to: Siah Lay Hoon, 55 Jalan 56/26 Jamam Sri Rampai, Setapak 53300, Kuala Lumpur, West Malaysia.

17-YEAR-OLD FEMALE Liverpool supporter would like pen pals all over the world. Write to: Dikra Muhsin, PO Box 14272, Baghdad, Iraq.

GALATASARAY 7 LIVERPOOL FAN, 19, seeks pen pals from all over the world. Hobbies are soccer, soccer and soccer. Please write to: Cenk Ugurses, Nispetiye cgd. Peker sok. 35/14 Levent (80600) Istanbul, Turkey.

MALAYSIAN, 14, wishes to correspond with pen pals worldwide. Hobbies are travelling, reading, swimming and gardening. Write to: Chong Sing Yee, 337 Jalon Air Panas, Setapak 53200 K.L. West Malaysia.

SCOTTISH GIRL, 18 would like to correspond with male or females worldwide. Hobbies are collecting banknotes from all over the world and football badges. All letters answered. Write to: Helen Climie, 22 Hunter Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland.

14-YEAR-OLD MALAYSIAN seeks pen pals. Hobbies are reading, gardening and painting. Please write to: Roudhatul Hafzan, 29, Jalan 66/26,Jaman Sri Kampai, 53300 Setepak K.L. West Malaysia.

15-YEAR-OLD LIVERPOOL SUPPORTER would like to correspond with Napoli, Sampdoria, Fiorentina or Real Madrid fans. Write to: Robert Lawler, 61 Leopold Road, Crosby, Liverpool, L22 6QY, England.

MALAYSIAN 15, seeks pen pals worldwide. Hobbies are reading and swimming. Please write to: Tee Yen Ha, D/A 46079, Tee Chai Ee, Pej. Kenderaan, Pulapol, Jalan Gurney, 54100 K.L. West Malaysia.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN, 15, would like pen pals. Hobbies are English football, pop music and "The Beatles". Write to: Milos Plank, Seredska 65, 917 05 Trnava - Modranka, Czechoslovakia.

17-YEAR-OLD NIGERIAN would like pen pals from all over the world. Please write to: Anderson Igbmovis, PO Box 8857, Benin City, Bendel State, Nigeria.

EXCHANGES

IRISH SUPPORTER would like to exchange football programmes from European fixtures and South American fixtures: Write to: Joseph Dillon Jnr, 5 Verbana Lanw, Sutton, Dublin 13, Ireland.

BULGARIAN, 24, wishes to correspond and exchange badges, flags, books, magazines, posters, programs, stamps etc. Please write to: Edward Papazien Street "Georgi Rakovski" No 152, app 6, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria.

EXCHANGE posters, pennants, foulards, metal badges, flags, magazines, scarves and photos with friends from all over the world. Write to: Zomantz Brigita, Gos lancuful No 17, BL 106/c, Sc. B.ET.5 AP. 68, Sec 2, Bucharest 73371, Romania.

COLLECTORS

METAL BADGE COLLECTOR seeks other collectors in England and Scotland. Please write to: Dr. Frityz Zeeh, Karl-Marx-Strasse, 12b, Bockau/Erzgab, GDR, 9403.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN seeks collectors of autographs/photos with autographs from all over the world. Write to Vaclac Mikes, Tyrsova 766, Kolin 11, Czechoslovakia 280 02

INFORMATION DESK

J PRIEST, Winchester: Three English-language publications relating specifically to the 1986 World Cup came our way after the finals. The major work was Mexico 86: A Pictorial Review of the 1986 World Cup Finals, edited by Phil Soar and John Bone and published by Windward, W H Smith, St John's House, East Street, Leicester, LEI 6NE (price £14.95). Paperbacks were Mexico on Fifty Dollars a Ticket, by Mick Worrall (price £2.98 from the author at PO Box 16, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 6UT) and In the Eye of the Whistle: Refereeing at the 1986 World Cup, by David J Ross (published by ONEREAL, 1800 Belval Crescent, Orleans, Ontario, Canada KIC 6J5).

GARY MILNE, Clevedon, Avon: A full list of all European first division addresses can be found in the European Football Yearbook 1988-89 (Facer Publishing, 7/9 Colleton Crescent, Exeter EX2 4DG). A selective list of European and South and Central American clubs' addresses can be found in the World Football Handbook (Queen Anne Press, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7QX).

MARK SMITH, Leicester: It's hard to suggest a publications starting point to instantly expand your knowledge of international football. The annual Rothmans Handbooks provide as comprehensive a statistical base as anything easily available, while Hamlyn's Story of Football puts flesh on the facts and figures bones to be found in Rothmans. Soccer is, however, a game of constant change and this year's rules for any one competition may be irrelevant next year.

SEND ENGLAND NORTH!

Sir, – I write to you with reference to the Brian Glanville column (Feb '90) about where to play England's international matches.

I am sure I speak for the majority of Northerners who would relish the chance to see international football that doesn't cost the earth nor involve an eight-hour round trip!

May I suggest the money earmarked for a new national stadium be pumped into ground improvements at Goodison, Old Trafford and St. James Park.

Finally, as for the players who complain that they are missing out on the experience of Wembley stadium, I can remind them that they are fortunate to be representing this nation – surely an honour in itself!
IAN.D. BARR, St Martin's Drive, Blackburn.

Sir, – I have just read a letter from Lester Kite of Surrey about his concern for the Scotland World Cup team.

Gunn maybe in better form than Leighton at the moment but Goram of Hibs is clearly the best keeper for Scotland at the moment. Gillespie has played at full-back for Scotland before and was clearly out of position. I must however agree with Alan Hansen being selected.

I suggest this team: Goram – McKimmie, Gough, Hansen, Malpas – McStay, McCall, Collins, Durrant or Bett – McCoist, Johnston.
ANDREW HALLIDAY, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland.

Sir, – Forming a Great Britain side may be a great idea for those who wish to see a British side win Olympics and World Cups, it also may be a good idea to have a Great Britain league but I for one don't think so.

Forming a Great Britain side would mean the loss of Scotland as an independent national side. This would be a sad day indeed as the Scots without independence turn to soccer as an expression of their identity.
CAMERON NEIL, Michael Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.

BOOKS

SIMON Inglis found his book about domestic football grounds inspired such interest that he expanded his horizons, with great success.

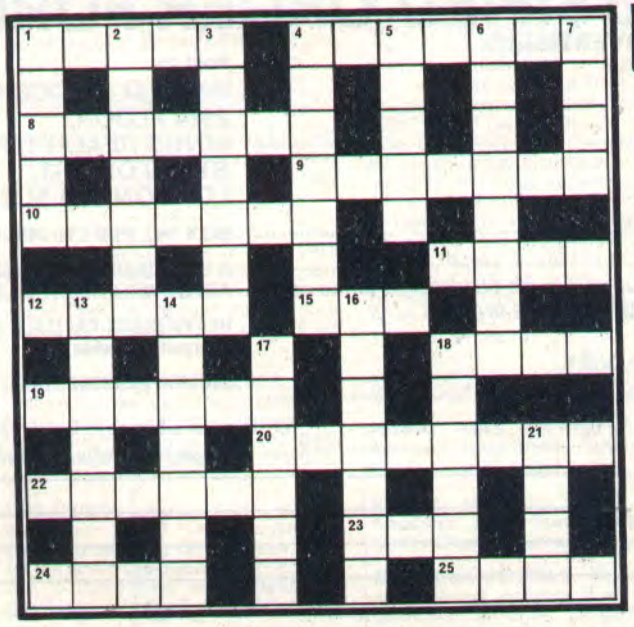
Football Grounds of Europe (price £14.95; from Collins, 8 Grafton Street, London, WIX 3LA) is the result of a personal odyssey to 33 countries and 241 stadia. Anyone interested in the international game should find a place on their bookshelves for a volume whose text weaves histories of clubs and countries into the architectural fabric of each succeeding venue.

On a historical theme, Soccer The World Game has been re-issued by Hamlyn (Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London,SW3 6RB; price £9.95) with an introduction by Arsenal manager George Graham. Here you find all the world's major soccer nations, clubs and star players. It's an excellent instant guide to the history and personalities of the world game.

Publication now is aimed, no doubt, at catching the World Cup market. Aimed directly at that is Viva: Ireland Goes to Italy by Eoghan Corry (Poolbeg Press, Knocksedan House, Swords, Co Dublin, Rep Ireland). This is a World Cup preview book from the Irish point of view. It includes all the expected basics (fixtures, Irish pen pictures, etc) but there is also an interesting and informative section on the history of independent Irish football – a subject on which most fans are in the dark.

Finally, even though the African Nations' Cup is now over, students of the world game will still be rewarded by obtaining a copy of the special preview edition published by West Africa (price £1.50) African Tele-promotion, Grange House, Highbury Grange, London, N5 2QD). The magazine features comprehensive national histories, star pen pictures, statistics, etc.

NOTE: The African Football Handbook alluded to in last month's World Soccer can be obtained directly from the author, Mel ap Ior Thomas, at 2 Hafod Ruffydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd LL41 3DQ.



WORLD SOCCERCROSSWORD
Compiled by Barry Talbot

ACROSS
1. Beckenbauer's successor as West German team boss.
4. International player recently granted French citizenship.
8. Barcelona forward.
9. Winners of the 1971 European Cup-winners Cup.
10. West German midfield star from the sixties & early seventies.
11. Dutch league side.
12. Team from Luxembourg.
15. Scorer of the winning goal in the 1973 European Cup Final.
18. City where England won 6-0 in 1937 and 6-1 in 1966.
19. See 1 down.
20. Beaten finalists in the 1966 European Cup Final.
22. European team manager.
23. Richard, Sunderland defender.
24. – Lane, home of the Shakers.
25. Italian scorer in the 1934 World Cup Final.

DOWN
1. Brazilian club of Bebeto & 19 across.
2. Member of Argentina's 1978 World Cup winning team.
3. Former Brazilian team manager.
4. West German centre forward in the 1978-1982 World Cups.
5. Forename of Italian hard man Benetti.
6. Nickname of Aldershot F.C.
7. Liverpool's victims in the 1984 European Cup Final.
13. Three times European Footballer of the Year.
14. Team who play at Elm Park.
16. Beat 17 down to win European Cup-winners Cup.
17. See previous club.
18. Spanish league side.
21. Team from Northern Ireland.

MARCH SOLUTION:

ACROSS: 1 Gentile; 5 Jules; 8 Lynam; 9 Shilton; 10 Avellino; 13 Segers; 16 Beglin; 17 Rosato; 19 Grimes; 21 Nils; 23 Evans; 24 France; 25 Dortmund. DOWN: 1 Gylmar; 2 Nantes; 3 Immel; 4. Emson; 5. Jair; 6 Little; 7 Santos; 11 Iran; 12 Ostrava; 14 Ferrera; 15 Clement; 18 Sansom; 20 Seed; 22 Leon.

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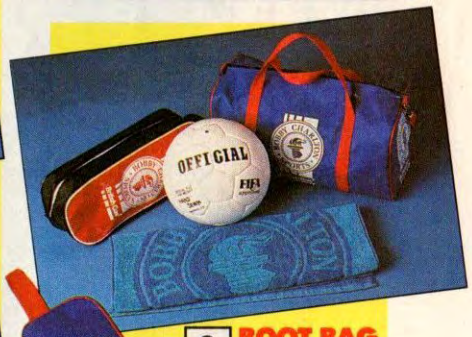

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